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Chamier

THE

UNFORTUNATE MAN.

BY

CAPT. FREDERIC CHAMIER, R.N.,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF A SAILOR."

By Heaven! I'll hate him everlastingly
Who bids me be of comfort any more.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE MOST UNFORTUNATE MAN IN THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

> A dreary sea now flows between,
> But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
> Shall wholly do away, I ween,
> The *marks* of that which once hath been.
>
> *Coleridge's Christabel.*

For what possible reason a man so unfortunate as myself was ever brought into this miserable world, I am quite at a loss to imagine. My parents were not unfortunate before me—none of my brothers or sisters—and, to my misfortune, I have nine of them—have been unsuccessful in life; I, only I, out of this family, appear the target marked out to be fired at by every malignant spirit. Fortune and Robert Ganjam are sworn foes; and Robert Ganjam has only received so much of Fortune's bounty as to have endued him with sufficient spirit never to repine over the greatest misfortune, and never to exult if the tide of goodness eover the low-water mark of misery for the extraordinary space of five hours of existence.

My uncle, Mr. Benjamin Banana, is quite the reverse; he is a man who has throughout life, with one exception, been fortunate; if the breeze of an ill wind took all his projects aback, he could pay round-off upon his heel, brace about, and to a certainty find a fair wind to blow him into port. Yet is he the most miserable man alive; he is a stranger to all comfort, because he finds fault with his comfort: no weather, no climate can please him; it is too hot in London

during the summer,—it is too cold in Paris during the winter; Spain is too treacherous,—for what can equal a warm sun and a cool breeze? Italy, during March, none but an Italian can stand; and, with the exception of only one island in this miserable world, he wonders how any nation can boast of its climate. He frequently avers that Russia and England are equally cold; "For," said he, "if a man is *frozen*, what can it signify for a degree or two of intensity?" He is rich, generous, warm-hearted, and affectionate,—yet he is poor, penurious, indifferent, and reserved. He is a living contradiction; and the ingredients for making punch are not more at variance and yet produce a more generous end than the component parts of my own uncle, Banana. He always declares he is the most unfortunate man in the whole world; while I, although I never avow it even in my dreams, imagine I am no despicable rival.

Our lives, mingled together, may not be either uninstructive or unamusing; and, in beginning my own, I shall only record that I was born during as violent a gale of wind, in as murky and dismal a night, as the blessed climate of England has ever produced during November; and Varley, who after my birth cast my nativity, declared I was under the special protection of Saturn; adding, with a grim smile, that I should have through life "the devil's own luck;" and certainly he has been right; I have had the devil's own luck.

I am no friend to those poetical people who begin their stories in the middle and then trace back for a commencement; my plan, like Lord Byron's,

> "Is to begin at the beginning;
> I abhor all wandering as the worst of sinning."

I like my readers to walk by my side, but I sincerely advise them not to be so courteous to Banana, unless they are prepared to hear of more woes and miseries than either Sensitive or Testy* ever ventured to pour forth in their most acrimonious fits, or in their most desponding humours.

I was sent early to school, because I never could be kept out of mischief at home; the fact was, that whenever any

* The Miseries of Human Life.

of my ugly brothers broke the cups and saucers, set fire to the nurse's cap, put a hot cinder in her lined shoe, or purloined one of her false curls to play conjuror's tricks with, the blame invariably lighted upon my shoulders; I was either flogged forthwith, popped into a dark cupboard, or sent supperless to bed. It was rung into and upon my ears forty times, both with voice and hand, that "I was a good-for-nothing mischievous boy, and should never be a credit to myself or my family." I confess I cared very little about the latter, for, as long as I could be a credit to myself, I thought I could not be in debt to another.

It happened that my eldest brother, who was fortunate enough to die about the time that fortune began to turn against him, for he had just married, had left as a legacy to our nurse, a respectable good-looking soul, a very fine imitation bronze figure of an old man sitting upon a mountain, not unlike the picture of the Pleasures of Hope, corresponding to the following lines of my old friend Campbell's (which Pleasures, I beg to state, I have long since abandoned, or only read occasionally, to satisfy myself how it is in the power of a clever poet to gull his readers):—even I, the most unfortunate man in the whole world (although I never allow it publicly), sometimes venture to hope that my tides of misfortune may not be like those of the river Amazon, six months at a time the ebb being about ten times as strong and as rapid as the creeping flood:

> "Now on Atlantic waves he rides afar,
> Where Andes, giant of the western star," &c.

This representation of Mr. Andes, without the star, was stuck upon the nursery chimney-piece, and every morning and evening underwent a dusting with a dimity rag, having as much care bestowed upon it as the ornaments on a lady's boudoir table. It so happened that my brothers and myself were possessed of those destructive weapons called cross-bows, but we had no target, for, ever since my second brother, in firing at a servant behind some nobleman's carriage, missed the gold-laced scraper of a cocked hat, and broke the glass and scarred the face of a young scion of nobility, for which, of course, I suffered, we had confined our operations to assailing any beggars or people whose garb

denoted poverty, for that is always a safe mark, and no one need fear either revenge or retaliation. Poverty, they say, is no sin; but it is no small misfortune, it seems, to disinherit a man from his lawful property. Who believes a poor man? no one! If he ventures to complain, who heeds him? are we not justified by his poverty in believing some sinister intention to procure money? Besides, it has been proved by Dean Swift, and he was a clergyman, that the poorest person is always the most liable to suspicion; at least, the anecdote of the corkscrew would warrant the assertion. But if the poor could obtain no redress, they could move off, and move off they generally did, leaving us only a chance shot at our opposite neighbour's housemaids, as they opened the windows of a morning and shook the dust off the rug for the benefit of the oculists. The devil—that is, Saturn—who always had me under his protection, suggested to my mind that Andes would be no bad mark; the hint was loudly applauded, and forthwith we placed the bronze gentleman (who had something about,

> "And like the baseless fabric of a vision,
> Leave not a wreck behind,"

written on a white ground, on the rock against which he elegantly reclined) upon an old baby-house, we standing at the distance of a long gallery from our target. The figure was as invulnerable as Achilles, and, like him, escaped the sticks, until after a quarter of an hour's firing, with an occasional slight encroachment on the distance, my third brother, a young gentleman with as demure a countenance as a Methodist parson when he mounts upon his chair to give a cool lecture to the surrounding and gaping crowd, fired, and hitting Andes right in the face, verified the last above quoted line. This trifling incident produced great consequences; as usual, I was the victim, and, after being severely cuffed, even by the culprit, I was packed off to school, with my character pinned to me, as conspicuous as the tail of a monkey. I was the bearer of a letter, in which I was designated as the most mischievous urchin alive; all my own and my brothers' propensities were mentioned, and, in conclusion, I was most strongly recommended to the vigilance and attention of the schoolmaster. I remember his saying,

when he had read the letter and eyed me with a malicious pleasure, "Oh, I shall cure him, my dear" (addressing his wife, who was a snarling, snappish, thin-necked, wizen-faced, sour-countenanced old hag; a kind of breed between a fortuneteller and a glassblower; in fact, she had proved her ductility, and was so thin, that I expected to see her snap when she bent). "Oh, I will cure him, or brooms shall be dear in the parish for the next six months!" I will give the devil his due, he certainly tried to cure me, for he pickled me more than once; and I am ready to make oath before any police-magistrate every quarter, when I go to swear that I am not a parson, that I was flogged fourteen times for nothing, although, thank Heaven! I am fortunate enough to have forgotten the smart; for we are not all over us, like the affectionate heart of the lady,

"Wax to receive and marble to retain;"

or I might be known by my marks, being in as regular lines as a crimping-machine for a lady's cap, or the outer coating of the under part of a sucking-fish. If the orchard was robbed by any suppliers of Covent-garden, I was flogged; if any boy was seen out of bounds, I was flogged; if a riot occurred, I was flogged; until latterly, I really think the old schoolmaster used to flog me in preference to using the dumb-bells, merely to keep his chest open. I remember these trifling sufferings, which greater disasters have not obliterated; they were the least of my woes: even the little kind hints from my master's worse half were only as a few more thorns, which time has plucked out from all but memory.

I was grown to the goodly age of thirteen, when I was asked what profession I would choose; and this was the only opportunity I ever had of following the bent of my own inclination. I had a great hankering after India. My brothers had gone out in regular rotation to that country, in the civil service, and I confess I felt a great desire to walk in that beaten path; I could easily have reconciled an enlarged liver and the yellow *qui hi* countenance to my feelings; leaves in autumn are yellow, and why should human nature differ from the rest of creation? Then, too, I had

often heard my father, who had resided some thirty years in that sweet climate, talk of the pomp and honours of past days for ever to be foregone now: it was sweet music to listen to menials of office surrounding or heralding a great man, calling out, "Here comes the great tiger of war!" which tiger would have been blown down by any easterly wind, as he rounded the corner of Hanover-square, in full progress to the Mullagatawny Club. I dreamed of nothing but chubdars, hookarbadars, jemidars, abdars, chokedars, and every thing ending in ars but jack-tars; and having frequently heard my father affirm that any fool would do for India, I thought I might succeed quite as well as any of the numerous stupid fellows one sometimes may meet by accident, who have gone out to that land without a grain of gold or sense, and returned overburdened with both. Now, nothing—no, not even my misfortunes, which I never mention—annoys me so much, as to see the cursed, cringing sycophancy of some men, who, seeing a gingerbread lout who rolls in a carriage and feeds upon turtle, whose head is as empty as his pockets are full, flatter and fawn, and ask his opinion, as if reason and talent had descended in the shower of gold from the pagoda tree. I, however, do not subscribe implicitly to the dicta of some authors, who assert it as a lamentable truth, that men who become rich by trade almost invariably become poor in intellect. Lord Byron says,

> "If commerce fills the purse, it clogs the brain."

Beyond a doubt, it is poverty which sharpens the mind; and poverty, under this consideration, since it obliges a man to read, and study, and fag, is the only tolerable misfortune in life, for that teaches us to stand firm against the rest: but the poor man must never aspire to talent. Churchill says,

> "Beggars of every age and station
> Are rogues and fools from *situation*;
> The rich and great are understood
> To be, of *course*, both wise and good."

And another very fair and very talented rhymer has jammed the above four, quite innocently no doubt, into the two following:—

"Who sighs for wit when turtles grace the board?
Or who hears sense from any but a lord?"

It is wonderful how abstinence from the flesh-pots of either Ascension, Providence, or the Caymans clears the head and invigorates the mind. God knows, I was starved enough to have known the right course; but, had I steered it, with the fair and steady breeze of life pushing me forward, unscarred or unscathed, I might, perhaps, have recorded more fortunate events than the remembrance of the most unfortunate man. My mind was fully made up to go to India, and I knew I could obtain without difficulty a writership: all my castles were beautifully built, and I saw in perspective a life of affluence, independence, and ease.

I was one day in June, 1809, sitting with many of my schoolfellows under the shade of a large yew-tree, which stood in front of our school and near the old church, singing, to a tune of our own manufacture, a chorus from Dibdin,

"There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,
To look out for the life of poor Jack."

In those days of naval glory, the wooden walls of Old England were the theme of national admiration; the fleets of England were England's praise; and the splendid victories which adorn our naval history, were not

"With their heroes quietly inurned."

The navy were the conservatives of the country; no men were looked upon with more charitable eyes than sailors; all their faults and foibles were forgotten in their bravery and their services; and whenever a poet drew the character of a bold, straightforward, daring, foolish fellow, he was likened unto a sailor. Any beggar, habited as a tar, with his elbow stuck into the sleeve of his coat, having his long arm foreshortened, and who could muster up enough of a sailor's dialect, or nautical vocabulary, to say, "Look down, my lovely lady, with an eye of compassion on poor Jack, who lost his arm in the glorious battle of Trafalgar under the immortal Nelson; just drop a copper over your lee-quarter, and I'll bear-up and pick it up," was sure the appeal would not be in vain to any—*but a sailor*. Beggars, in those dresses, made more than the half-pay of an admiral.

But to a sailor the address was a bad one, for it implied that the solicitor had *got to windward* already; and sailors are by no means inclined to look down with an eye of compassion on any one who had laid his anchors out in that direction.

We had scarcely finished our chorus, when we heard its echo, not from any distant hill, but from the lungs of a man, who shortly afterward came rolling and roaring round the corner. He wore a straw hat, cocked on one side rather knowingly; his inexpressibles were large enough for an Irish family to nestle in; he had a Guernsey frock, edged with blue, the word "Victory" in the same coloured letters thereon; a round jacket, the right sleeve of which was swinging untenanted as its master rolled along the pathway; his shoes were sharp-pointed and long-quartered, having a profusion of string, while a long tail, carefully tied, dangled below the part where nature would have placed it in a monkey.

"Come, my little Britons," said he, "have compassion upon a tar, who has had the misfortune to have one of his spars shot away in the wars, and has scarcely any stores or provisions in his hold, or rigging over his mast-head."

Our hands, not much accustomed to charity, simultaneously fathomed our pockets; and if we had recorded on our logs, in honour of the navy, the result of the soundings, it would have been not unlike the arming of the deep-sea lead after a visit to the bottom of the Channel—"fine sand and small shells." Jack stood like a real sailor, one arm a-kimbo, the other holding out his hat, which was none the better for the weather it had experienced, and, in spite of a large broad ribbon which surrounded it, looked a most disreputable castor. One of the younger boys, a kind of cake-and-jam lad, with a pale face and long teeth, who every now and then got a seven-shilling piece sent under the seal of his letter, managed, after many sighs and fetches, to bring up a halfpenny, which he placed in the reservoir of charity, looking as much as to say, Come, give me a nautical fight for this precious coin. The sailor began a flourish of nautical terms: he said the fleet were sailing *in* a bowling, when they saw the French fleet in irons to leeward; and that, after Nelson bore up, the enemy formed into a crescent. He talked of broadside and splinters, fire and smoke, boarding and sail-trimming, winding up his long yarn with various

quotations from the monarch of nautical poetry, and concluded with declaring that no life was so happy as a sailor's, no man so free, no person so respected: he spoke of prizes and prize-money as if he really had shared some; and concluded by wondering how any person could be a lobster of a soldier, or how men could be such land-lubbers as to live in a gale of wind on shore, when there was no security from chimney-pots or house-tiles.

"Thank you, my gallant little fellows," said he, as he placed his hat upon his long hair, which hung clustering in ringlets over his face, "thank you; and may you never know the loss of a leg or an eye, or ever live to see a banyan-day, or have nothing but the sky for a moscheto-curtain."

He was soon lost to sight, but not to memory: I remember, as well as if it were only yesterday, seeing the gallant old fellow roll round the corner; and can even at this distance of time recall the sensations I then experienced as I instantaneously resolved to make the sea the element of my future profession: all my pagoda visions floated away like a summer's cloud, and I stood cheated of my good intentions. The Sunday following we saw our gallant tar playing at cricket with the rest of the villagers, having recovered his lost arm, and being minus his tail and curls.

"Well, sir," said my father, "how long are you going to be in making up your mind as to the profession you intend to follow? For my part," he continued, "I do not exactly know to what service you would be a credit, but a chimney-sweeper—or the navy. You are too scampish for a parson, and too bad for India, and, once uncloaked in one, or turned out of the other, certainly ruined; but if you were to fail in either of the two former occupations, you could afterward turn either solicitor or marine officer; you have all the qualifications for the former, and any idle fellow will do for the latter."

"Sir," said I, "I have made up my mind to take the best of the two you have selected me as fit for; and therefore I will be a sailor."

"Humph!" said my father, lolling back in his great easy chair, and placing the fore-finger of his right hand against his right temple, wrinkling up his Indian skin, which arched over the nail like the hood of a cobra de capello, while the second finger occupied the space between his nose and upper

lip; "humph! a sailor, ay! Well, I have no serious objection; I have heard it often said that any blockhead would do for the sea; and that the more devil there is in a youngster the better he gets forward in that rough profession. I like your spirit, but I am ashamed of your taste. You seem to have resolved rather hastily, so do me the favour to be off to bed, and to-morrow, if you are still firm of purpose, I shall write to my friend Ruffle, who commands the Saturn at Plymouth, to give you a rating, if he has one to spare."

Spare a rating, thought I, as I lighted my candle; I get plenty of those articles at home, and only leave it in the hope of avoiding them for the future.

I went to bed, but not to sleep. It happened that, about a month previous to this conversation, my third brother had died when I was at school, and the determination to be a sailor was made known on the very day of my arrival at home. The room in which I was to sleep had always been shared with my brother, and this was the first night I had taken sole possession of the chamber. Alas! the dreariness of solitude! how well calculated it is to shake the firmest nerves and inspire the most startling thoughts, none can tell but those who have experienced it.

I felt an awkward shudder as I looked at the untenanted bed, which so lately had been warmed by my brother. As I undressed, I gazed upon it with a frightful stare; it was bare of clothing and without curtains—it looked a desolation: it alarmed me to think, and the night, which was gusty and windy, shook the little resolution I possessed, and left me the coward I felt I was. When I had undressed, I placed the candle on a chair near the bed-side, and covering myself in the sheets, endeavoured to force mys elf to sleep. It is not to be obtained by solicitation; it is the disdain of it that ensures it,—court it, and you never obtain it.

My youngest brother was then about six years old, and slept with the maid, in her room, on the floor immediately below mine. This servant was of a steady age, and had so conquered all dispositions to riot in her blood, that she could scarcely ever bring herself to look a man in the face. In her hey-day of youth she had been unfortunate in love,—but luckily for her, accident had prevented the natural development of her disgrace. The publicity being avoided, she grew coy by experience, and the one error retrieved, she resolved never in her life to run the risk of another. She had long since

declared to my mother that I was too old to sleep in her room, for, independent of her delicacy, I was rather a wild and untamed boy.

It was Saturday night, and the weekly ablutions had taken place; my brother was in bed, but the nurse had lingered below until half-past eleven o'clock, and midnight had sounded before she had composed her decent limbs to rest. In vain I had tried to slumber. I turned and twisted, and in endeavouring to banish thought, thought the more; no position was comfortable; the unsnuffed candle had burnt to the socket; the paper which made it fit the candlestick was in a blaze, and the unusual glare warned me of the necessity of extinguishing it. I looked round the room like a hunted criminal, and with the breath of despair I blew out the light, and was in darkness: then came all the unpleasant imaginations of terror; I fancied more than once that I heard some light footstep in the room, and, to avoid any thing so inimical to sleep, I enveloped myself in the bed-clothes. I had now worked myself up to a nervous agitation amounting to a most decided tremble, when I heard the clock on the staircase vibrate the hour of midnight; and scarcely had the record of time sounded the last warning, when the poker, tongs, and shovel fell down. No man startled by

"Graze of ill-directed knife,"

no man struck through the heart by a shot, or suddenly galvanized, ever jumped into a stiffer position: it was a right angle I made, for I sat upright in the bed, and with my hands endeavoured to keep my heart from bursting its cerement. The bed trembled like an aspen-leaf; a chair moved, or I fancied it. O that I could have extricated myself from my cursed confinement! I would gladly have had the canopy of heaven for my curtain; my imagination painted a thousand horrors; even the idea of a ghost, a thing in which I never placed the smallest credit, now occurred to me; I dared not open my eyes, for I dreaded to meet the glare of glassy eyeballs almost starting from their sockets; while the wan countenance, the skeleton figure, or the long, bony, extended arm and fingers might chase the remnant of reason from my mind. Ah! the shutter shook! A hope of escape presented itself, the window was on the right, and

the door on the left of the bed: with closed eyes and trembling limbs I jumped out, groped my hasty way to the door, seized the handle, tumbled down stairs, screamed all manner of murders, and flying with rapid strides to the nursery, I burst open the door, jumped head foremost into the maid's bed, and there, concealed from sight, I panted in security.

When I jumped into the bed, the maid, who had previously extinguished the light, finding a human being her unwelcome companion, leaped out on the other side, and gave vent to her fright in a loud hysterical scream; the shriek awoke my brother, who joined his lungs to the nurse's, and created a confusion beyond all description. The unusual sounds soon produced the footman, who, in his hurry to render assistance, forgot to place any part of his livery on his back or legs, and burst into the room, with the candle in one hand and a poker in the other. This no "unreal mockery" produced another terrific squall from the maid, who, quite alive to the indelicacy of her situation (for she was thinly clad to face a candle's light), immediately rolled herself up in the curtain; while John, suddenly aware how far he had trespassed against the rules of modesty and decorum, followed the example of the maid, dropping the candle in his fright, and holding the poker in a straight line before him. The house was alarmed, a clattering was heard along the gallery, and scarcely had John ensconced himself, when in came my father with a light, followed by the butler, who in his hurry had grasped a plate-brush. On seeing the footman wrapped up in the curtain, with only his powdered head sticking out, the nurse in a similar situation, and my little brother blubbering and crying, my father concluded, as the lady was not altogether devoid of personal charms, and had a most symmetrical figure, that some intrigue had been on foot; that the servant had forgotten the rules of precedency, and had violated the sanctity of the bed-room. My father, who wore his white nightcap, and who stood in an attitude resembling Oratory in a shirt, had already began a fine speech upon morality, modesty, virtue, propriety, confidence, and so forth, when I, half suffocated from my situation, and pleased beyond measure to find myself in such plentiful society, popped my head out from the bottom of the bed, and for the soul of me could not refrain from a sudden burst of laughter. My unexpected

appearance, and from such a place, for no one had thought of remarking the bed, seemed instantly to awaken the company from a dream; and had I not begun instantaneously to cut short my father's harangue, and explain the cause and effect, I might have been suspected, young as I was, of a disposition to imitate Don Juan, and perhaps have had a scuffle for my safety. In the mean time the maid-servants had arrived, and a general titter became audible; the nurse did not dare unrobe herself, and the footman, who I verily believe was as modest as Joseph, and just as little garbed, had too much decency to expose himself to such a congregation of persons. My father allowed an unusual visit from a smile to rest upon his countenance, and began to retreat along the gallery, followed by the butler, who, at the desire of his master, went into my room to see that all was safe; on opening the door, out jumped a large cat—the rascally intruder, who was the cause of coward being stamped for years and years afterward upon my name!

It was agreed in the nursery that the maids should retire in good order to their respective beds, that the lights should be extinguished, and that then the footman should, under the cover of darkness and his only garment, decamp as hastily as prudence would allow. The retreat was beat, and shortly afterward the household were at rest.

I did not dare return to my own room, and therefore was a sharer of my brother's bed, not without some remonstrance from the infuriated nurse, who showered down a heap of maledictions enough to bury any hero in the dust of despair, and who finally thought proper to wind up her address with nearly the following words,—and good reason have I to place faith and belief in the curse of a woman. "You mischievous young vagabond," said the dear old soul, "may you through life feel the annoyance which I now feel! may you never know the blessings of quiet, and when you are nearest happiness and fortune, may they be blasted, as I think my character is now!" After which she said her prayers again of course, got into bed, and lay blubbering and sobbing until both grew fainter and fainter, when they lapsed into a snore, and she began to enjoy what she had so furiously denied to me. As I could not sleep, I resolved not to be singular as to the want of enjoyment of quiet, so I took the liberty to elongate my leg and disturb my brother

whenever I thought him on the point of slumbering: this led to an altercation, each mutually abusing one another for the disturbance, until we awoke the nurse, who created a much louder noise by boxing our ears: after which we fell into sweet forgetfulness; and in dreamless slumbers wasted eight hours of life.

I had hardly received my morning's welcome, when a tailor made his appearance, and I was measured to be a midshipman: my mother drove away to Odell's, and paid more for a straight piece of iron, misnamed a dirk, than would have purchased a sabre fit for deeds of war; a cocked hat, as long and as low as an Indian's canoe, was tried upon my head, and voted, like the canoe, to contain *a scull*. An extra quantity of shirts and stockings were crammed into a large chest; and among these useful articles, I am in justice bound to say, a large cake was deposited. Two days following, my father received a letter from Captain Ruffle, mentioning his pleasure in being able to oblige the family; that he had a rating ready for a boy of the first class, and that the sooner I was despatched the better, as he was under sailing orders, and only waited for the gale to moderate before he put to sea. As the winds are variable at Plymouth as well as the weather, it was resolved to start me off that evening at four o'clock. Every preparation was made, and as my father had a committee to attend at the Alfred club, or something equally important to be disposed of, he took a premature leave of me, gave me plenty of good advice in a few words, some little money, and a letter to deliver to Captain Ruffle on my arrival.

The whole concern, master and lumber, being ready, a hackney-coach was called; and in the company of the butler, a gentleman who kept a secret key of the cellar, and who very frequently managed to rid himself of all worldly cares and concerns, we drove off towards the Saracen's head, Snow-hill.

But that parting was not without a tear; the kindest of mothers fell on the neck of the most worthless of sons, and all the fountains of affection, chilled perhaps by my former misconduct, broke their springs, and flowed from their natural outlet. "Robert," she said, "you have chosen a hard life, but one which has honour and glory for its rewards; you are from this instant a branch severed from the parent

tree, the fruits and blossoms of which depend upon the soil of the heart, and the deep root which it takes. I know you are bold, impetuous, forward" (another word, I supposed, for impudent), "temper these with discretion, and you must succeed. Never give way to misfortunes—this is your father's, and was your father's father's motto:—see here," she said reaching a spoon which lay in a saucer on the table, in which was some jam and calomel for my brother, "read this, 'Ne cede malis;' let this be your motto in the hour of misfortune, and the blessing of a parent light upon your head, and cheer your heart when the storms of affliction shall howl around you, and the waves of distress threaten to destroy you! There, my boy, take this, perhaps last kiss from your mother; the wildness of youth shall never be a blight upon my affection. I love you, dote upon you, admire you; while I live, you shall never want, and my power shall not be in vain when I solicit your father to overlook your follies."

The door, as it closed, jarred upon my heart; I felt a weight upon my mind no words can describe. I jumbled over the stones, lost in thought, and yet thinking of nothing definable; and while my ideas vibrated between the curse of the nurse and the blessings of a parent, the coach drove to the Saracen's head, and I began life.

CHAPTER II.

Many are the sayings of the wise,
In ancient and in modern books enroll'd,
Extolling *Patience*, as the truest fortitude;
And to the bearing well of all calamities.
Samson Agonistes.

We had arrived about half an hour previous to the departure of the coach: my chest was placed with the rest of the baggage, after considerable altercation about its size, and the butler, who had a visit, as he was pleased to call it, to pay in the neighbourhood, left me to wait for the coach, and to pack myself off.

Curiosity led me to the street, and insensibly I wandered from the Saracen's head. Feeling in my pocket for my money, for boys are always fond of handling their wealth, my hand came in contact with my father's letter for Captain Ruffle, and that same curiosity which Dr. Johnson says is a sign of a vigorous intellect, prompted me to read the contents. As it was necessary for me to eye the writing carefully, I turned up one of the many lanes in the immediate vicinity of the coach-office, and which, from the few people who passed and repassed, offered an opportunity. It ran thus:

"Half-moon Street, December 10, 1809.

"DEAR RUFFLE,

"I have sent you the little scamp you promised to take. I will venture to say you never commanded more mischief in a smaller space. I could make nothing of him, and his schoolmaster seems to have been equally unsuccessful; he has, however, some good points, especially for a sailor: he is daring and thoughtless, and incorrigible on shore, owing to his idleness; but he is staightforward enough, although as mischievous as any boy under the sun. I had intended him for India, but he took it into his head to go to sea, and I know that, had I denied him his choice of a profession, he would have shipped himself on board a collier rather than balked his own inclinations. I commit him to your care; and, if the world does not belie you, your discipline will tame his unquiet spirit. Do not allow your friendship for me to interfere with any punishment you may think proper to inflict; the pain will be his salvation: remember, I leave him entirely to you.

"Mrs. Ganjam desires to be kindly remembered: of course, she feels this parting with another of her boys, but time will soon overcome her grief. I by no means envy you your Channel cruise, especially at this season of the year; but I hope your rollings and pitchings will be repaid by ample prize-money. I have lost no time in sending Robert; should he require money, I shall gladly honour any bills you may think proper to draw on his account. If you can spare a moment, write me a line.

Yours very truly,
JOHN GANJAM.

"Capt. Ruffle,
H.M.S. Saturn, Plymouth."

The last was the best part of the letter, but that sentence which recommended me so graciously to his discipline was the unkindest *cut* of all. I could not stifle the tear which involuntarily started from my eyes—I was alone—cast from my parents, and only to be remembered when the check was presented; had there been a wish expressed that the discipline might be tempered by moderation, I should have been satisfied: in short, there was not a word of real affection throughout the letter. This, thought I to myself, is the result of an improper curiosity. Listeners never hear any good of themselves, and those who pry into the secrets of others seldom find themselves complimented.

I had wasted about half an hour between the determination and the consummation of the act. I knew that reading a letter belonging to another was no very laudable affair; and after having resolved to commit the trifling breach of faith, I wavered between the intent and the gratification: the fact is, we are always slow to make the first false step, and conscience, our natural guardian, stands a steady sentinel over the threshold of innocence; remove the guard by any act thought to be improper, make only the first advance to seduce the soldier from his post, and then good-night Virtue. It is like the drop of water which falls on the ground—scarcely perceptible—but let another, and another follow, and a hole is soon made, and the ground ruined. And thus it was that I began to make a hole in my manners and innocence.

It was high time for me to return to the coach-office, and with some difficulty I retraced my steps; to my astonishment I had overstayed the time, the coach had left the office more than half an hour, and was beyond the power of being overtaken: a porter proposed a hackney-coach to take me to the White-horse cellar, but another told me to save my money and my trouble, for the coach never remained there more than ten minutes, and that it was as far as Kensington. The butler had never returned. My baggage had been sent to Plymouth, while its owner was left in the world of London in solitude. My first idea was to return home, but I feared the consequences. My father was a man easily exasperated and hard to be reconciled; his temper, like straw, rapidly ignited, and burnt fiercely; but, unlike it in other respects, it was not so easily extinguished: the fault was

clearly mine; I had left the coach-office when I ought to have remained, and now I remained when I ought to have left it. The porters who stood about the yard only laughed at my distress; the clerk in the office pointed to the clock and was very sorry; but the time had passed, and the evil was without a remedy: it was the last coach that left the office that day; it had not left it one minute before its time; and it was the passengers' business to be ready. The crowd of people who bustled into the office to book themselves for their various destinations soon elbowed me from my place; the clerk having given his first answer, never condescended to add any further words than, "The coach started the same time to-morrow, and there was one place still vacant." Between the fear and the indecision of a boy, I made no answer, betook myself to the street, and when I returned to take the place some one else had forestalled me, and I was left to my own resources: had I known any thing of London I might have taken a place in the mail, but I had only twelve shillings in my pocket.

Now came the first grand error of my life. I resolved on no account to go home; and in the idle vacancy of indetermination I wandered from street to street until I lost my way. What to do—whither to go—where to shelter myself—I knew not; the day, which closes at four o'clock in the smoky city, soon began to be enveloped in a thick mist; the lights in the streets were scarcely discernible; and when the clocks struck six it was night. I was now in the vicinity of Tower-hill, perfectly ignorant of my situation, nearly wet to the skin from a small mist which had continued to fall; hungry and tired, a dirty-looking eating-house attracted my attention, and, with the boldness of despair, I entered and asked for something to eat.

The man who stood behind the counter was a stout, ill-looking fellow; he eyed me with a look of surprise, and bade me walk into the back-room, and be seated; he in the mean time called a ragged servant, to whom he whispered with some eagerness, and who immediately placed me by the side of a small, cheerless fire, and commenced a conversation as to my wants. By degrees, this girl, who was about seventeen, and pretty, though dirty, extracted the whole of my story, the amount of my money, and my ignorance of any future plans. She returned to her master, who

shortly afterward brought me in some beef and beer, which he desired me to pay for at the time, asking me the sum of four shillings: this I paid without a thought; it never occurred to me if it was cheap or dear; I only knew that I was hungry, and very shortly the wretched meal disappeared, and I asked for a replenish: it was brought, and four shillings more were paid. I had scarcely begun the second attack when the maid returned, being followed by two hard-featured men, dressed like sailors, who took their seats by the fire, and called for some beer. Had I been a judge of men from their outward appearance I should have felt very uneasy at my situation; I was as innocent as a dove in the world's ways, and fancied every kind word arose from a kind heart. The two strangers were engaged in close conversation, which was interrupted for the moment by one of the party pouring some beer in a glass and offering it to me; as I had some of my own I thanked him, and refused the offer. About this time a third person entered the room, and sat down at a small table at a little distance from the others; he seemed to know them, but they exchanged no words. The first two now began to talk out loud of their success during the evening, saying they had crimped four or five pretty good seamen, and that they expected before midnight to get some more.

"I wish," said the man who entered the room last, "that I could find one or two able seamen for my brig; for I want to sail to-morrow, and, thanks to some of you good-natured gentlemen, I have not men enough to heave my anchor up."

"For the matter of that," said one of the rough-looking couple, "I dare say we can accommodate you, if so be that you don't keep your purse-strings so close; but, you know, sailors just now are rare articles, and they likes the men-of-war better than your service; for if they now and then get a taste of the cat, yet they get a drop of grog, and they make prize-money by heaps in the frigates: we can give you a couple of landsmen; you can dock their coats; and when you get them into blue water you can teach them something better than to swab the decks."

"Ay, ay," said the first speaker; "but the difficulty is to get into blue water, and long before we get into the chops of the Channel we may fall in with a gale. I have only six able seamen on board, and I am bound up the Straits."

"What ship, sir?" asked the other man, who was a large whiskered, rough-looking baboon, with a tail as long as an African monkey's; a roll of tobacco big enough for a bottle-stopper in his mouth, and which was sticking out like the pouch of a well-stuffed marmoset.

"The Rapid," said the third man.

"Oh! she as lays down abreast of the docks, with the white yards, and sliding gunter royal mast; why she looks like a man-of-war brig more than a Smyrna-man."

"Just so," said the captain; "I make her look as much like a man-of-war as possible, for I never wait for convoy; and if I am forced to take the instructions, I give the commodore the slip the first dark night, and make sail ahead."

"That might be dangerous though," said the first man; "the French luggers are quick, and have the heels of any of you that carry a cargo."

"That's true; but a faint heart, you know, never won a fair lady. I think less of the Frenchmen than of the Algerine gentlemen; who, if we have not men enough to beat off their rascally feluccas, are sure to pop upon us as we hug their coast to keep clear of the Esquerques."

"Ah! you are out of my latitude now," said the first man; "but if so be that two men will suit, why, do you see, we will try to accommodate you; but could not you manage with one good one, and a youngster about the size of that one there?" said he, pointing to me: "why he would be a capital hand for a top-gallant yard; a light lad aloft for your fine weather scrapers."

"Ay, he'd do well enough aloft after a little; but he is a light hand for a cargo, and too slender to work at the hold; but I want a lad, and he's just the cut that would suit; but I must alter his suit to his new cut if I have him. Well, young one," said the captain, "what do you say to a trip up the Straits? when you come home you'll be a man, and not like these fellows that walk up and down London streets all their lives, only seeing the shops, or what's in a gentleman's pocket, for which curiosity they sometimes dance upon nothing."

I told him I was intended for the sea, and that I was to join the Saturn; that I had lost my passage in the coach, and that I did not know what to do or where to go.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the baboon; "a midshipman adrift! what a lucky fellow you are! Why you had better been drowned than go to sea with that old Ruffle; why, he would stick you at the mast-head for hours together. I never shall forget that fellow, when he hung eleven men and his boatswain one morning in Jamaica; they called him Captain Killdozen ever after."

"Yes," said the captain, "you have had a lucky escape. Was it not Ruffle who used to flog his midshipmen every Monday morning, or make them ride the spanker-boom in a heavy sea-way? How many of them did he expend one cruise he took in the Channel?"

"About ten," said the baboon; "he used to bait his shark-hooks with them. Suppose, young gentleman, you were to go on board the Rapid with that gentleman, and see how you like your berth? You can't get to the Saturn now, for she sails to-morrow at day-light."

I said I had no objection to go on board the Rapid. Instantly all three rose, and told me to bear a hand, as the boat was waiting; adding, that I could sleep on board, and that I could come on shore in the morning if I did not like being a cabin passenger.

"Or," said the first man, "if you don't like the Rapid, the captain will no doubt," said he, looking knowingly at the gentleman, "put you on board your frigate, which he is sure to meet—indeed, he will go into Plymouth on purpose."

I thanked the captain for his kindness, which, he said, was giving him no trouble whatever: indeed, he remarked that he would do more; he would, if I liked it better, keep me on board of his brig, and teach me to be a sailor. By this time I had put on my hat, and was ready to go, when we were stopped by the baboon.

"Avaust there, shipmate," said he to the captain; "all in the regular way, you know; we must have two pounds for him; no doubling the Cape, or fighting Tom Cox's traverse; we dogged him, you know, and it's all the same as if we put him on board."

"Surely, surely," said the first one; "and before morning we will give you the other; but pay and go, you know, like a hawser in a boat."

"No," said the captain, "I don't see why I should pay for him; I found him here, and—"

"Oh dear, sir," I replied, "I *have* paid; I paid eight shillings for my supper."

"Did you?" said the rough-looking fellow, "then old Stout took the first of the breeze at any rate, and had the ballast out before he sent to tell us that the craft was adrift."

A long altercation took place, words ran high, they talked of kidnapping the boy, and after many differences, it was arranged that when the other was shipped all was to be squared, as they termed it: after which, the two sailors wished us a good night, and a fair wind in the morning. The captain threw an old plaid cloak over my shoulders, and taking me by the hand, led me into the street.

It was a thick fog; the weather was rainy and windy, cold and piercing; the streets were insufferably dirty, and the whole was emblematical of my false step. We had not gone far, when we were accosted by about a dozen watermen.

"Boat, sir? boat, sir?"

"You'll do," said the captain; "shove ahead, my lad."

"Take care, sir," said the boatman, "take care you don't slip, sir; very greasy weather: take care, young gentleman: let me carry your cloak—there, sir;—sit still if you please;—here, Jack, look after our gang-board. What ship, your honour?"

"The Rapid," said the captain.

"I knows her," replied the boatman; "I took the captain's son on board about an hour ago; and a sweet nut he is for the devil to crack."

"Why so?" said the captain.

"Oh! he can't be more than fourteen, and he had two ladies in the boat with him; but the mate would not let him take them on board."

"Is that all?" replied the captain, and began to whistle a tune.

We were soon alongside the brig. The captain, whose name was Smith, introduced me to his son, who was a short, stout-built lad for his age. He had made two trips with his father before, and told me of the pleasure he had experienced in visiting foreign parts; he was, however, a low, coarse, vulgar boy, the image of his father, both in manners and face. Although the captain had mentioned his only having a few men on board, yet I fancied the vessel was crowded. I heard numerous voices, all in conversation

about going to sea: every now and then a boat came alongside; and during the whole night there was a continued noise, arising from the frequent visiters. I was sent to bed with the captain's son, and told to go to sleep immediately, as if a person could sleep whenever he chose.

At daylight the Rapid was under way; the wind was light and variable, and the tide was in her favour; she slipped through the water quickly: we soon left Greenwich behind, and by the turn of the tide, or the first of the flood, we were far down towards the entrance of the Thames. The breeze soon freshened, and about two o'clock the sky began to assume a threatening appearance; the brig was kept under all the sail she could bear, and towards night an easterly gale had fairly established itself. I was sick, and went down to the cabin where I had previously slept; but I was soon hauled from that abode by the captain's son, who, giving me a kick, called me a lazy, impudent young hound, and bade me be off to the fore-peak with the rest of the ship's company. If I had been his equal in strength ten hours before, now I should have been vastly his inferior. Of all utter prostrations of mind and body, none are so powerful as sea-sickness. The first chilling herald, followed by the frequent yawns, seems alone sufficient to annihilate a person; but when succeeded by the splitting headache, the intolerable cold, the frequent sickness and whirling giddiness, then it is that people become quite indifferent as to life. The kicks of young Smith were only answered by sighs and groans; and there I should have remained a living nuisance, had not two stout fellows seized me by the arms, and, lugging me along the deck, left me on the lee-side of the forecastle. The deck was wet with the sea, which every now and then flew over the vessel; the wind howled through the rigging; the night was dark, and the rain, which fell in continued showers, added to the misery of my situation. I will not say I thought of home, for I was incapable of thought; I was as indifferent to the world and to life as a man in a torpid state from cold; sick, dreadfully sick; among strangers, all busy in their own avocations. The ropes were flying about in all directions; the captain was cursing and swearing; the men were shortening sail, or close-reefing the topsails; "the hoarse wind made the treble and the bass;" and I alone seemed to be a forsaken boy in

the confusion of the night. One of the men, however, when he found me in the coil of a rope which he happened to want, hauled me towards the ladder, and slid me down into the fore-peak; there I lay partly insensible, and almost inanimate.

By degrees the sickness abated, and I was inclined to venture on deck. The vessel was still flying before the wind; the sea occasionally flew over her; every thing looked in confusion; the men were lying about,—some in their wet clothes, and some wrapped up in large thick rough coats. It was broad day; the weather was foggy and rainy; nothing could be seen but my new element and our solitary vessel. Scarcely had I put my foot on deck, clinging to one of the ropes to prevent my falling down as the vessel rolled over the sea, when the captain's son saw me; he was standing by the man who was steering the brig, and looking aloft, then at the sea which was tumbling after the vessel,—and rolling his sharp eyes about, they fell upon me.

"Here, you young vagabond," said he, "come aft here, and don't be hanging on to the fore-bits like a swab to the head-rails."

I felt awed somehow by the manner in which he spoke. I relinquished my grasp, and endeavoured to get aft; but scarcely had I got abreast of the gangway, when I fell down and rolled over to leeward. The malicious boy, if boy he could be called, for he was a man in iniquity, laughed at my misfortune, and repeated his command in a more authoritative tone, assisted by a curse.

"Well, you sprawling whelp you, are you going to sleep in the lee-scuppers, or are you going to obey me? By the Lord, I'll freshen your way with a rope's end, if you don't spring your luff when I speak to you!"

This was to me, what it may be to the reader, an unintelligible mass of words, and, in all probability, any explanatory note from Smith would only have rendered the passage more obscure. I understood quite enough of it; and I endeavoured to obey his orders, and managed to get near him. At this moment the captain came on deck,—but how altered from his former looks!—he was dressed in a round jacket, a glazed hat, and a thick pair of rough inexpressibles; he was the most diabolical-looking, ferocious man I had ever seen. He first looked at the compass, then at the sails,

and then saluted the man who was steering, in nearly these words:—

"Why don't you steer her with a small helm? What the devil are you yawing about so, like a pig in a fair? Look at her wake, you sleepy hound, you. Why, it has as many twists as a snake; by-and-by you'll bring her by the lee, if you keep bobbing over the tiller like a fisherman's float. Oh! you're alive, are you?" said he, addressing me. "Come, none of your shore-going laughs here, if you please. Why, you're as dirty as any other of your Tower-hill messmates: here, Bill," said he to his son, "get a pair of shears, and dock his coat-tails for him."

"Ay, ay, father," responded the little imitator of tyranny, and down he jumped into the cabin; returning in a moment with a pair of large scissors, he caught hold of my coat-tails and cut them off in an instant. "Shall I crop his head, too?" said his son; and, without waiting for an answer, he whipped off my hat, and with a close of the scissors left one side of my head nearly bare. In vain I cried; I was quite helpless; for, had I relinquished the hold of the rope to which I clung, I should perhaps have rolled overboard the next minute.

"Come, none of your holding on there like death to a sick man," said the captain; "try and get your sea-legs. I am not going to feed you for doing nothing, as they do in the king's service; I am not going to have any of the king's hard bargains here—fellows with short hair and long teeth: trot down and clear away the cabin for breakfast. Bill, show him how to set about it, and make him your mate."

"Ay, ay, father," said the ruffian, and, catching me by one ear, I was soon in the cabin.

"None of your lobstering," said he: "you're mammy-sick, I suppose; but I'll soon work that out of you. Come, clear away the decks here, and then run forward to the coppers for some water; and mind you wash that dirty face of yours, or, by the Lord, I'll souse you in a bucket of salt water."

Here was a deplorable change! From the enjoyment of every luxury, I had become suddenly a slave—a slave to my inferiors in every requisite of life. I had been brought up with all the ideas of a gentleman, and suddenly found

myself the cabin-boy of a brig, without a single article of clothing but that which was on my back, my whole fortune consisting of four shillings. I had no bed,—in short, was as helpless a pauper as ever breathed. A sailor-like compassion was evinced by some of the seamen; and, in spite of the assertion of the captain that he had not sufficient hands to weigh his anchor, after a day or two at sea we mustered twenty-five men besides myself. But all attempts to relieve my situation were opposed by the captain's son, who said that some two years back he had entered on board a frigate, and was midshipmen's boy; that the ill-usage he had then received made him vow eternal vengeance upon any thing bearing the name of a gentleman, if ever the chance occurred by which he should become master: his time had come; and he followed up his vow with a curse that he would be revenged upon me; that I should know the bitterness he had tasted; and that mercy was a word he once had used, but never found. He had scarcely concluded his speech, when a sail was reported right ahead, our brig being then about half-way down Channel, running with the wind broad on the larboard quarter, with only her close-reefed topsails and foresails set, going at the rate of about nine knots an hour.

The stranger was soon seen from the deck: she was a large frigate; on the larboard tack she hove-to under her close-reefed main-topsail and fore-staysail: she looked in the haze as large as a three-decker, and appeared to roll very heavily. She was evidently an English frigate; the cut of the sails of a Frenchman, and the rake of the mast, were so strikingly different that it required no conjurer in naval tactics to know the distinction at half a glance; but, to remove all doubts, for she had made us out to be English, she hoisted her ensign, and fired a gun to windward. No sooner was this done than every man but seven was stowed away below: some were clapped under empty casks; some in the bights of the cables, covered over with swabs; and all concealed but the above number; for, although it blew what sailors called great guns and small arms, we knew that the English men-of-war, when in pursuit of either prize-money or seamen, cared very little for the winds and waves, as long as they gained their object. The captain seemed unusually agitated, and swore that if his men

were found his ship would be detained: he went below, and turning me out of the cabin, began to collect some papers, having first left directions to keep the frigate about a point and a half on the starboard bow. We of course neared her fast. The mate, who was a hard-featured, rugged-looking seaman, popped his head down the hatchway, and told the captain that the frigate was about a mile off, and that he could see some men clearing away the lee-quarter boat. Upon this, Smith determined to pass within hail; for he thought, and he judged rightly, that when the captain of the frigate heard that he had only sailed the day previous from London, he would not risk his boat's crew in boarding him.

We now braced the fore-yard sharp up, as if intending to heave-to under the lee of the stranger, and steered for her stern. The captain was seen sitting on the taffrail, with a speaking-trumpet in his hand, and when within hail he began:—

"Brig, ahoa!"

"Sir!" answered Smith.

"Where are you from?"

"London."

"Where are you bound to?"

"Gibraltar."

"How many men have you?"

"Seven," was the reply; and here, as the captain of the frigate seemed satisfied, Smith said, "May I ask, sir, what ship?"

"This is his majesty's ship the 'Saturn.'"

I held up both my hands; I cried out, "Here am I! here is Robert Ganjam, sir! do take me on board, sir." But my tiny voice was unheard amid the roar of elements, and the captain's son, seizing me by both ears, and kicking me most violently, only said, "Hold your tongue, you young devil you: what business have you to bellow out? who asked you to bawl? Take that, and be cursed to you," said he, as he struck me in the face, and knocked me down the companion.

The frigate, as if perfectly satisfied, hauled down her ensign—a signal always understood as implying that the other vessel was at liberty to continue her course; we did the same. I was on deck again in a moment, and actually

knelt down to Captain Smith, and implored him to put me on board the frigate. "You know what you promised," said I; "you know I told you I was about to join that ship; all my clothes are on board—the captain expects me—oh! do, for God's sake, let me go! here is a letter for Captain Ruffle; here it is, sir!"

"Forward there," said Smith.

"Sir?" answered one of the men.

"Bring a wet swab here, and see if you can choke this boy's luff. Here, Bill," said he, calling his son, who was below, "look after your boy, and gag him; why he makes more noise than the devil in a gale of wind."

My relentless persecutor, pleased beyond measure to execute any order to tyrannize over me, took the wet swab and tied it over my mouth, letting the end hang down on my shoulders, and saying, "Now, mate, touch your hat to one of his majesty's officers; don't you see the swab* upon his shoulders? Why, bless you, this is Lieutenant Ganjam, of his majesty's ship the 'Saturn:'—ah! damme but I'll *jam* him a little tighter than Jackson, who was jammed between the fly of the ensign and the mizen rigging. Here," said he, turning my face towards the frigate, "take a last look at your fine ship, my boy; and if you don't behave yourself, we'll sell you for a slave elsewhere. Look at her," said he. I did, and so did he, but with very different countenances: mine was all joy—his all despondency: the frigate was in the act of bearing up, and in two minutes was running our course, with her three topsails and foresail set, throwing the sea clean over her, and apparently flying in pursuit of us.

Captain Smith looked as pale as death when he came on deck and saw the frigate: he looked at her with the eye of despair when he saw her "walk the waters like a thing of life." To make more sail and endeavour to effect an escape would be madness, for it would only give room for suspicion, without the slightest prospect of success. I could not refrain from saying to his son, "Now it's my turn to be master, so please to take off my epaulet; only let me get on board of her once, and then it will be my fault if I don't repay you for all your ill-treatment." He took the swab

* A swab is a vulgar name for an epaulet in the nautical tongue.

from my neck, and seemed inclined to sue for pardon. The frigate was fast approaching; every time she rolled, her decks, crowded with men, were visible; she was shaking two reefs out, and making more sail, steering so as to pass us to windward. I stood on the weather-quarter, with the eye of hope sweetened by expectation; I never remember to have felt such a delightful glow as at that moment; but soon, soon, alas! all my fairy visions were destined to fleet away—soon all my prospects of release were to give way to the reality of tyranny.

The captain, whose eyes seemed to sweep the horizon in all parts at once, and to remedy all probable disasters in a moment, soon grew more composed. "Send all the men but five down below," he said; "the frigate is not coming after us at all; she is in chase of that lugger to leeward." Here all eyes fell upon the spot indicated, and there was a vessel crowding under all the canvass she could spread, steering the same course as ourselves, and about five miles distant. The mist had concealed her from our sight, and it appeared that she had but just discovered the frigate; for the captain said that when first he saw her he could see between her masts, and that she must have been lying-to in the hopes of making a prize of us. This intelligence damped all my hopes. My little tyrant promised to repay me for my kind intentions as soon as we were clear of the frigate; and, by way of making his revenge the sweeter, lashed me to the weather-quarter, with my face towards my own ship, and my hands tied in such a manner that I could not make any signal. Meanwhile the frigate surged through the water, and edged down so as to pass within hail of us, without losing any ground with her chase; every time she threw the spray over her bows she seemed to spring towards us. She was now close: I called to Captain Ruffle; I told him I had a letter for him; I cried out my name; but all was unheard; and when Smith thought I might by accident attract attention, he came behind me, and putting both hands over my mouth, laughed at my ineffectual attempts to hail, and kept mimicking my voice as it gurgled through his fingers.

"Brig, ahoa!" said Captain Ruffle.

"Sir!" answered Smith.

"You had better make more sail, and keep sight of us

as long as possible, for that is a French privateer to leeward."

"Thank you, sir, thank you," said Smith.

The frigate ranged close up alongside; our sails, becalmed under the lee of her greater canvass, flapped idly against the masts; she surged by us; and when young Smith liberated me—she was out of hail for ever!

CHAPTER III.

Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee,
Thou liar of the first magnitude.—CUMBERLAND.

THE morning after my departure, the party in Half-moon-street were at breakfast as usual. Mrs. Ganjam was apparently slightly indisposed, Mr. Ganjam seemed uncommonly indifferent as to every earthly object but himself and his food, and Mr. Banana, who had accidentally dropped in to ask about the rate of interest on the Bengal Remittable Loan, had just unbuttoned his coat, pulled down his waistcoat, and given a hasty glance at a mirror, when in came Miss Ganjam, who seated herself at the officiating post of honour, having previously rung the bell.

"Roberts," said Miss Ganjam, as the butler entered, "this water does not boil: take the urn out and remedy this *inadvertence*, I suppose I must call it."

"Oh!" said Mr. Banana, "nothing goes right in this wretched town; I really am the most unfortunate man in the whole world. I believe this is the only time, since I returned to this villanous climate, that I ever ventured without my umbrella, and of course down comes the rain, sufficiently heavy to swamp a Chinaman."

"Does it rain, Banana?" said Mr. Ganjam: "I hope you are not wet?"

"Does it," replied Banana, "ever cease raining in this wretched country? I declare one might as well expect a total cessation from taxation as a glimpse of sunshine between the first of November and the end of March."

Roberts returned with the urn hissing and spluttering like a catharine-wheel.

"Did you see Master Robert start in the coach yesterday?" said Mr. Ganjam.

"Yes, sir," replied the butler: "Master Robert went exactly at half-past three o'clock. The coach was quite full: four ladies and one elderly gentleman were inside, besides himself. I asked one of the ladies to take care of him, and she assured me she would see him safe to the inn."

"Did you see his trunks properly placed?"

"Yes, sir; one in the fore-boot, and the other two on the roof. I told Master Robert where all his things were; he seemed very comfortable and pleased."

"Comfortable and pleased," sighed Banana, "in a coach with four old women and one old man, there to sit jammed and squeezed, like a lemon in a vice, for the comfortable period of eight-and-forty hours! or only allowed to breathe an intolerable atmosphere when the horses are too tired to pull the coach up a hill: comfortable and pleased! Well, my nephew must certainly be a man who would find comfort and pleasure in the Black-hole at Calcutta."

"He will have enough to do to find it in a midshipman's berth," replied Mr. Ganjam.

"Poor, dear, darling boy!" said Mrs. Ganjam; "he will be dreadfully cold this wretched weather: I hope they will not make him keep a night-watch till he is stronger."

"My good gracious goodness me!" said Miss Ganjam, "how differently people feel and think! Now, I should like to go to sea, if only to watch; and—"

"I should like some tea, if you please, Jane; I have been watching long enough for it. Now for some poetical romance, I suppose," remarked Mr. Ganjam.

"Roberts," said Mrs. Ganjam, "I hope Master Robert had a corner seat in the coach."

"Yes, ma'am," replied the lying valet; "he sat, as you desired, with his back to the horses; and I told one of the elderly ladies, who wanted to exchange places, that my young master was generally sick in a coach, and therefore it was requisite that he should be near a window."

"Comfortable and pleasant intelligence enough for the others to hear!" said Banana.—"I hope, to make him quite happy, there was an infant in the coach?"

"Yes, sir," replied the butler; "there was an infant about six months old, which was crying a little; but I think it was weaned, sir, for the lady had a bottle with a piece of leather at the end, and was trying to quiet the poor little thing."

"Poor little devil!" snorted Banana—"poor Robert, I say!"

Breakfast was now progressing in the usual manner; a slight skirmish of politics between the gentlemen had taken place; the best investment for money had been seriously commented upon; Miss Ganjam had nearly recited half Pope and Milton in quotations, and Young's Night Thoughts, and all the starry firmament above had been romantically alluded to, when the footman came in with a letter, on a silver waiter, which was handed to Banana.

Banana lived only two doors distant from Mr. and Mrs. Ganjam, and he usually breakfasted and dined with them. It was his positive direction that no letters should ever be sent to him, and this deviation from his orders arose from the word "immediate" being on the back. The footman said that the servant waited for an answer. Banana was a very nervous man, and stood in contradistinction to Ganjam, who was one of the coolest of all human creatures, and although irritable from a peculiarity of temper, yet one who only allowed this flourish of tongues to be lavished on his own family: he could bite his lip and swallow his spleen better than any man alive, and, like Mount Etna, looked very calm and still, while a fire was raging within him.

"How excessively provoking," growled Banana, "that a man cannot have two minutes to himself out of *any* twenty-four hours! here, independent of the postage, which is the most rascally imposition ever thought of by any government, one is obliged to read the contents and write an answer at breakfast."

"I don't see exactly what postage you can have to pay for that, seeing that a servant waits for an answer," said Mr. Ganjam, coolly; "or why you are obliged either to read it or to answer it at breakfast."

"Good God!" ejaculated Banana, "don't you hear that the servant is waiting?"

"Well, let him wait," replied Ganjam; "the servants were made for us, and not we for them. I really wonder

how you can suffer yourself to be annoyed by such insignificant trifles."

"Trifles, forsooth!" sighed Banana; "why, it is a lawyer's letter, as I'm alive! I hate them all—even to speak to them—for they *charge words;* and if once they get you into a correspondence, then no man knows how long the bill may be; but this scoundrel, who has had the impudence to write to me, and to disturb us at breakfast, I never heard of him, or his client, or any thing that is his. Here it is:

'Furnival's Inn, Dec. 11, 1809.

'SIR,

'I am instructed by my client Mrs. Wrathful to give you legal notice to quit the apartments you hold of her at the rent of twelve pounds per month, on or before Christmas-day next.

'Yours obediently,

'JAS. NOAKES.

'To Benj. Banana, Esq., 16 Clarges-street.'

"So that, in this free country, I am bothered at breakfast by some miserable, dirty, six-and-eightpenny attorney, and told to turn out of my house, neck and crop, on Christmas-day; that is, in the middle of winter, to catch cold by going into some dirty, damp apartments, without any reason being assigned, with very little law and a great deal less justice."

"Eat your egg, my dear Banana, and let the lawyer's letter precede the attorney to his future destination—the devil! However, you will have to pay him for his letter, whether you turn out or not."

"Pay him for his letter!—I'd see him d—d first! I beg your pardon, Miss Ganjam; I hope you will pardon the impetuosity of my temper: I assure you the words flew to my lips before I had made an agreement with my tongue."

"Oh, never mind, my dear uncle," simpered Miss Ganjam, "either the words, the letter, or the lawyer; they are all three bad enough: papa will tell you after breakfast what you had better do."

"The gentleman who brought the letter, sir," said John, "and who is a lawyer's clerk, wishes to know if there is any answer."

"Tell him," said Ganjam, "that he will hear from Mr. Banana's solicitor in the course of the day."

"Hear from *my* solicitor!" vociferated Banana, "*my* solicitor! Good God! I would as soon have a cobra capello for my favourite as have a solicitor!—an attorney, a vile attorney—tied to my establishment! I am the most unfortunate man alive; here, for instance, just as I have made myself comfortable and happy, that very moment, for I never have been happy more than a moment since I came to this wretched climate, in comes a lawyer's letter at breakfast-time, and then I'm told that *my* solicitor is to write an answer, and I pay for both!"

"Have you paid your rent, Banana?" said Ganjam.

"To be sure I have not," replied Banana. "When I took the lodgings, the landlady or her dirty maid, I don't know which, promised that I could have wax candles whenever I wanted them; at the end of the month she brought in a bill for the candles, which never could have been wax, saying, 'they were long sixes,' or some such jargon, and modestly hinting that 'I had seven shillings to pay;' so I told her that until it was sunk in the rent, I would not pay a farthing. Besides, I think it was very ungrateful; more especially as Mrs. Wrathful told me one morning she was rather pressed for money, and I lent her ten pounds, without any note of hand, or bill, or any thing."

"More fool you, Banana; your liberality and your niggardly moments will ruin you. Here you are growling because you fancy you have to pay twopence for a letter, or seven shillings for wax candles, and at the same time actually lending, or rather giving, for you will never see it again, ten pounds to a perfect stranger."

"Oh, poor woman!" said Banana, "if she never does pay me, why that won't signify much; but to impose upon me, to steal my coals, my tea and sugar, and then to ask me to pay for her candles, which she had agreed to give me for my rent—I think that is so ungrateful that I am resolved I will not pay her until she makes the deduction."

"Then you will have an opportunity of reading a lawyer's bill, which will puzzle you more than a plumber's or a coachmaker's in France; and likewise an opportunity of exercising your temper when you pay about 200*l.* for defending seven shillings."

"Well, my dear brother," said Mrs. Ganjam, "I really feel for your situation. You have the temper of an angel in all things which require it; but for these little trifles, which other men would smile at, you would be the best companion in life."

"Dear me," simpered Miss Ganjam, "I think Uncle Banana quite perfection; I do so like to hear him complain of his hard fate, while poor Robert, who used to be beat by every one, and now sent to sea, never had spirit enough to complain."

"He will require all his spirit to bear the discipline of Ruffle," said Mr. Ganjam; "that fellow would tame an hyena."

"I wish he would tame the attorneys," said Banana; "I declare I never should complain again even of my worst misfortunes, if I could only see one of Ruffle's boatswain's mates making his blood circulate by extracting some drops near the back-bone of this Mr. Noakes. I swear that, in all my life, I never knew any thing so impertinent as this letter, and if I can fight an attorney, I'll call him out."

"Banana," said Mr. Ganjam, "Hudibras says

> 'Where no honour's to be gained,
> 'Tis thrown away in being maintained.'

Pay the man for his letter, the woman for her house, and get lodgings elsewhere;—you can have Robert's room if you are not afraid of ghosts."

"Pay the attorney!" roared Banana; "never, Ganjam, never! I would sooner ship myself off for Java direct. Ah, that is something like a climate; no rainy days, no cloudy mornings, all is sunshine and liveliness."

"And snakes, and moschetoes, and fevers, and scorpions, and centipedes, and fleas, flies, bugs, bats, and water-rats," said Ganjam, all in a breath.

"Stop, stop," said Banana, "all the time I resided in Java, which was seventeen years, I never had but one snake in my bed; was only stung twice by the scorpions, and only bit six times by the centipedes."

"And the moschetoes?" said Ganjam.

"Oh, poor little innocent things, Miss Ganjam, not bigger than a gnat, and *nearly* as harmless; they buzz and bite, but that's all."

"And quite enough too, I should think," replied Ganjam. "But come, let us hear the whole account of your misery in the house, how you found out that you were cheated, and why you refused to pay the rent?"

"Oh, that is just the business of five minutes," said Banana, at the same time relinquishing his egg, and pushing the plate a little from him: "why, you see, the other day I was invited to go down to Prescott's, who lives near Bath, to pass a month or two with him. Prescott is an old friend of mine, and we were in India together. I remember once, when he was sick at Madras, I recommended him to go to the Nielgherries in order to try—"

"Our patience, Banana!" said Ganjam; "what have India, and Madras, and those cursed mountains to do with Mrs. Wrathful, Mr. Noakes, and your lodgings? Just confine yourself, if you can, to the subject."

"Oh! very well, Ganjam, only keep your temper. Well, I sent my servant to take two places."

"Two places!" said Miss Ganjam: "why, who was going with you?"

"Only myself, Miss Jane; but as I hate being crowded or incommoded, I took the opposite place for my legs. Well, sir, only listen—I really am the most unfortunate man in the world—When I got into the coach, and seated myself in my corner, and was just spreading my cloak to wrap my feet up in, who should come in but an elderly lady, as she was pleased to call herself, and down she sat exactly opposite me, jamming my legs up like an Indian fakir, those men who make vows to—"

"Tell their stories," said Ganjam, "without wandering. Don't get into India, or it will be four o'clock before you get fairly from the Golden Cross."

"I did not dare say," continued Banana, "that I had taken the place for my legs; but I hinted that the cloak was mine. 'I'm very glad it is yours,' said the old snap-dragon, 'for I was just going to hand it out to the coachman; and pray, sir, have the kindness to take it, for it is very much in my way.'—'I put it,' said I, 'on my place.'—'Then somebody moved it, I suppose,' she replied; at the same time letting down the window, through which came a breeze as heavy as a monsoon, or one of those squalls in the China seas, called tiffoons."

"Oh!" said Ganjam, "what in China now!"

"No, no, Ganjam, only, you see, it was a thorough draught: for a gentleman who came in wrapped up like a mummy—I could not even see his face—had seated himself by the side of my tormentor, and left the window down; so by way of a hint I took out a silk handkerchief and hung it from my hat to make a veil. The stranger was covered to the very eyes, and I could not make out if he was old or young, or what. 'Are the insides all right?' said the coachman. I trembled at the very indelicacy of the question. 'Oh yes,' answered the porter, 'the insides is all right, and the gentleman *with the legs* is in.' As this conversation was heard, every one began to look at his neighbour's legs, and the lady, who was opposite me, took the liberty of ascertaining—quite by accident, of course—that mine were actually *bona fide* legs; she felt them as she stooped to find her handkerchief, which was in her reticule on her lap. We were only three in the coach. The mummy began to elongate his legs in order to feel the lady's. I kept cringing mine close to me; and the lady, rather afraid of her own being felt, kept hers close to mine. A doubt seemed to exist—"

"If ever you would finish your story, Banana!" said Ganjam. "Upon my soul, you would have exhausted the patience of Job himself; here have I been listening for a quarter of an hour to a cock-and-bull story about three insides and one pair of legs."

"Oh dear me, papa, do allow Uncle Banana to continue; he is so droll, and tells the story so naturally."

"Oh come, Ganjam, none of your impatience, I beg. The coach soon drove off; the mummy went to sleep, with a north-easter blowing upon all that was visible of him. The lady opposite kept admiring the view; and I, almost petrified, hugged my corner. In this miserable manner we continued, without once exchanging words, until we had passed Reading, when, finding the cold so intense and the company so silent, I stopped at a small village and paid my fare. I had just got to the door, when the guard called out, 'That's the gentleman with the legs!' Immediately out popped the heads, and every eye was alive. I ran into a small room, and never felt so pleased as when I heard the coach driving off without me; and since, I have discovered that the mummy

was Prescott. I immediately ordered the only post-chaise in the village, and, notwithstanding I was told that the evening before two gentlemen had been robbed, and themselves thrown out of their carriage, their mouths stuffed with dirt, and their pockets emptied, I came back to London to my lodgings. To my great astonishment, I found lights in my room, and, to the much greater annoyance of the landlady, I walked in just as she and her friends were sitting down to a snug supper—having before helped themselves to my tea and sugar, intending, as they said, to replace it to-morrow; that is, for Twining's best, filling the caddy up with hyson mundungo-stuff, sold at three-halfpence a cartload in India for dunnage for the Indiamen, when—"

"O, for God's sake spare us!" said Ganjam, "and do try to get to the end of your story before midnight."

"Well, the next morning I wrote a letter to Mrs. Wrathful, begging that she would deduct that day from my month, as she had used the apartments; and, seeing my tea not a little diminished, and knowing how dangerous it is in this barbarous country to accuse people of plundering, I wrote upon a small piece of paper, 'Dear me, I wonder who has been taking me away!' and left it on the tea, shutting the caddy carefully, but leaving the key in the lock. She soon came hectoring into the room, and said that I was no gentleman indeed to hint that any one had stolen my tea, and that she was quite astonished I should venture to write to her, a poor lone widow, in the impertinent strain I had done; that I had taken the apartments for a month; that they were up on Christmas-day, and that I should pay her to the moment. 'Then,' said I, 'that shall be done directly; so here, take your money, and I am off to-day.'—'That you may do if you like,' she replied; 'but you shall pay me for another month, because you have not given me notice of your intention to quit.'—'Very well,' said I; 'then I'll stay, and I am much mistaken if you don't get tired of me.' As the best way of disturbing any house, without being indictable for a nuisance, I resolved to take lessons on the violin, and I engaged an old opera performer, a cast-off orchestra-man, to come and give me an hour's quiet practice at eleven o'clock at night, at which hour Mrs. Wrathful generally goes to bed. I began the gamut with such a squeak, and I continued, first my hour—then had tea—then practice—then brandy and

water, until about two o'clock. The consequence was, the people on the ground-floor gave warning, the ladies on the second floor gave warning, and now it finishes by the lady giving me warning."

"Is your story at last finished, Banana? Well, thank God in good earnest! You *are* a living contradiction; you admit that you lent Mrs. Wrathful ten pounds, because she was in distress; and then, two days afterward, you require her to deduct the price of one day out of a month's rent."

"It matters little," replied Banana; "the whole world are in league against me, and you have joined the numerous host: as such is the case, do what you like about the lodgings, and I will go and seek others."

"Well," said Ganjam, "be it so: leave the attorney to me; I will arrange the business, and you shall never hear of it any more: but, for God's sake, give up the violin, for, of all instruments, none is so hateful to my ears, unless, indeed, touched by a Spagnoletti."

"Ha-ha-ha!" simpered Miss Ganjam, as she shut down the tea-caddy: "I do not know which is the best plan, yours or mine, to detect plunder; I always fill both bottles, and only use one; but the servants take good care to keep them both even, and therefore the only satisfaction I have is knowing that some one does assist us."

The party broke up, each betaking himself or herself to the occupation of the day. Ganjam retired to his library, for he was a man of sound mind, and knew that life was rendered more agreeable by the wholesome disposition of time; and happy is the man who frees himself from the clog of idleness. Ganjam knew this: his early life had been passed in India; every moment had been occupied, for, when the toils of office were relieved by the relaxation of leisure, that leisure was enhanced by reading. His memory was wonderful; he was a classical scholar, a man devotedly fond of poetry, and could well distinguish between the harmonious numbers of Pope and the gaudy tinsel of Darwin; but while he gave the laurel of English poetry between the former and Dryden, he was by no means insensible to the merit of others. He frequently used to say, "Read, read, my children: no one knows the blessings of such recreations but those who have been left in solitude; for even in a desert, a man of a cultivated mind is surrounded in imagi-

nation, and the bright ideas of authors long gone rise before him to solace his loneliness, and to bless, even when the living world is dead to him."

This desire of information in accomplished literature had descended to his family: no moments fleeted away in irksome idleness; every minute had its occupation; the days vanished like a dream; and they stood in contradistinction to other families, for time killed them, whereas the others were employed in endeavouring to kill time. But when the evening came, then came cheerfulness, contentment, conversation; music, either vocal or instrumental, filled up the gap, if gap there was, in the lively sallies of the imagination. With this application to studies, the female branch avoided the extreme, and the men neither despised those less advanced than themselves, nor shot the arrows of ridicule at the undefended bosom of the idle.

Miss Ganjam, who is the only one who will occupy any place in these pages, was mildness personified. She was extensively acquainted with foreign languages. She was musical, she was lively in conversation, but required rather to be drawn out, for she made no ostentatious display of the talents she had laboured to improve. She listened rather than spoke; was contented to believe that men were better calculated to govern a state than women; and had so formed her mind upon Lyttelton's advice to a young lady, that she often confessed herself contented rather to shine in a woman's proper sphere, than, comet-like, to push men from the orbit in which nature had destined them to move. She had one failing in Banana's eyes, and that was, she never could pay attention to any conversation upon stock-jobbing, and literally once so far forgot her usual prudence as to rush to the piano, in preference to listening to a political discussion. Fortunately in this respect she was not much troubled, for Ganjam's whole soul was in his library, and he only read a newspaper to see what opera was to be performed, or if there was any intelligence extracted from the Bengal Hurkara.

Banana's history was as follows. Early in life he had been sent to India, and there joined one of the few houses of agency then existing in that country. His fortune was soon made, and he returned to England, having entirely withdrawn his name from the firm. At the expiration of three years he received the most pressing letters from his old partners,

requesting him to return; mentioning that, since his withdrawal, the speculations had not answered; in short, that, since his master-hand had retired, the other partners found themselves unable to conduct the business. The letter held out a tempting lure. They promised him eight thousand a year, without any risk of his own property. This last he instantly rejected; but, like many men who have returned from that country, where money was dross, to live in England, where the tax-gatherer drained the reduced income, he still saw before him the pleasant scenes of his youth, his increased fortune, and an occupation. He instantly resolved to return, and wrote to that effect, mentioning his intention of following his herald in two or three months at the farthest. In the mean time, that is, between the arrival of his letter and his appearance, the partners gave out that Mr. Banana, tired of residing in England with so reduced an income, and finding himself but a grain as it were in the mountain, had resolved to return to India and follow his old occupation. His known talents and attention to business soon gave a greater stability to the house. The natives had unbounded confidence in him, for he was a man of the strictest honour and probity; his word was his bond, from which he was never known to deviate, and not unfrequently produce to the amount of seventy thousand pounds had been intrusted to him, without any document having passed between the parties. His departure, like every thing he did, was hurried. He never had sufficiently considered what he had undertaken, and when he arrived in India, on a close inspection of the accounts he found the house in a state of insolvency. To have withdrawn instantly would have been to ensure its failure, and Banana had a heart too generous for that, and a head too clear to consider the business as desperate. He declared himself a partner in the concern, and was seen the next day at the house. He embarked his whole capital, and turned his attention to a speculation in opium with China. He saw the immense profits likely to accrue, and he seized the moment, when the house had recovered stability sufficient to enable him to undertake the voyage, to set the wheels in motion. He went and made his arrangements, and on his return found that one of his partners had retired to England, leaving his brother, a man no way calculated to forward the business, in his stead. In the

mean time the senior partner became "righteous overmuch." His Methodism and his conscience, two things which never troubled him much before, now began to assume some sway over him. He calculated that at the moment, if every creditor came for his own, some would be deficient. He thought he was acting dishonestly in continuing to receive when he had not enough to pay; and, in the terror of conscience, he betrayed the secret of the circumstances of the house, under a most sacred promise, of course, that it should be a secret. No one keeps a secret. We always manage to hint that we know something. Curiosity probes to find it out, and not unfrequently succeeds. A drunkard should never be trusted. Who knows not the old saying, "in vino veritas?" A man might as well expect to walk the first time of trial in security on stilts over smooth ice, as for a drunkard to be consistent. If the partner, like young ladies who first have particular proposals made to them, told one and then another of his sex, we know not; but the secret did escape. The buzz of uncertainty only rendered the concern open to more conjecture and comment; and one fine morning, when Banana went to the house, he found the different clerks and people connected with the establishment waiting for admission. His surprise was great when he heard from strangers that the house had failed. He never had been apprized of the religious man's intention, and in the midst of his most flattering dreams as to the realization of property by the speculation before referred to, he found himself a bankrupt; his every farthing gone; his years of toil and honesty useless; his time, his fortune, and, by some, his reputation lost. In vain he challenged scrutiny; it is needless when once the docket is struck. A banker's establishment, like a woman's virtue, is ruined if it is suspected. Cæsar's wife and the assets of the house must be beyond suspicion. Banana was ruined in all but energy and health. The accounts were wound up, the certificate was granted, and our curious friend had once more to begin life. His mercantile knowledge soon got him employment. By degrees he worked up the hill until he found himself sufficiently strong to settle in Java. His honesty, his probity, his candour, were proverbial. He soon began to grow great in the world's eye, and in ten years' time he had become an affluent man. Knowing the changes and chances

of this mortal life, he resolved not to give fortune an opportunity of playing him any more tricks. He remitted his wealth in produce to England, and embarked on board a ship called the Frederick, to return to his native island. The ship sailed from Samarang, and was to touch at Batavia. On her passage, Banana found his mind oppressed with some uncommon presages of a dismal kind. His produce had sailed long before him in other ships. He felt uneasy, and heard the warning voice of fate in his dreams. Startled at the frequent repetition of his nightly fears, he left the Frederick on her arrival at Batavia, and shipped himself on board of another vessel. He sailed, arrived safely in Portsmouth; but from that day to this the Frederick has never been heard of. It is supposed that she either upset, for she was a crank ship, or that she foundered. Years have now elapsed, the insurance has been paid, but no intelligence has whispered the fate of the unfortunate ship. Banana, when agitated by some imaginary misfortune, frequently says, "I am the most unfortunate man in the world, or I should have sunk with the Frederick."

CHAPTER IV.

> "The gathered guilt of elder times
> Shall reproduce itself in crimes;
> There is a day of vengeance still—
> Linger it may, but come it will."

The gale which blew the Saturn out of sight as she chased the privateer forwarded the Rapid towards her destination. I do not here, or anywhere else, intend to give a catalogue of my sufferings; few can imagine, who have not experienced the sensation of despondency which creeps over the mind when one feels a degradation and is unable to resent it; when a man of spirit and education becomes the slave of the worthless and the ignorant; when the hand of power is stayed by the superiority of numbers, or by the combination of insignificancy.

The lowest drudgery which ever disgraced the union of all the domestic classes fell upon me. But this was not my only suffering: I had to learn my calling, I had to become a sailor; I had to face the danger which was held too perilous for others; for when from neglect, or from caprice, the top-gallant yards were kept aloft until it was unsafe to despatch *a man* to unbend the gear, in order to send them down, it was invariably, "Here, you Ganjam, trot up like a monkey, and look sharp and stop the yard rope out." On me fell all the work of the light sails; and, unfortunately, I was, with the exception of the captain's son, the only boy on board. Night or day I knew no comfort or positive repose. Some scanty articles of dress had been given to me; I scrubbed my own clothes; I learned the inutility of opposition, when the opposition must be useless, and I was starved out of all courage to resist. True it is, that hunger would tame a lion, but it is by the exhaustion it occasions.

In ten days we were abreast of Gibraltar, but far to the westward of it; yet still we continued running to the southward. It was evident our destination was not Smyrna. We passed Madeira, making the land, and steered for Teneriffe; as soon as we saw the Peak another course was shaped, so as to pass to the eastward of the Cape Verd Islands; we were in the trade winds, and after running about a fortnight, we came into what the sailors called the Dolderums. The Dolderums are those very light flaws of wind which occur between the two trade winds, the one to the northward, the other to the southward of the line; and no one can fancy the annoyance of being baked under the equator for days and days, on short allowance of water, broiled almost to suffocation with the air, when it does come, as heated as if it came through an oven.

The ship's company amounted to twenty-five men in all, and they were now turned to work at the cargo, which consisted of fire-arms, swords, &c.; we had, besides, a great quantity of gunpowder. Our days in the Dolderums were spent in polishing musket-barrels, and arranging the hold for the reception of slaves. They, poor fellows, required not much labour from us; the only thing we did was to run a long piece of stout wood fore and aft the hatchways on each side of the orlop-deck; and by the time we anchored in Loango, the mart of slavery, we were ready to receive our cargo.

The barter for these live logs of mahogany, as they are called, was soon concluded, our muskets and powder were landed, and some cases of imitation-pearl beads were handed over to the merchants of human flesh, which attracted more attention than the more useful articles above alluded to. The women seemed enraptured with the ornaments, and not unfrequently a female, in all but positive nudity, could be seen with a profusion of necklaces and armlets exhibiting herself to her very great satisfaction before our ship's company. We were to have on board three hundred of these poor miserable creatures, and to run with our living cargo to the Havana; we were told that they were within a few miles, and the ship was put into requisite order for their reception.

In the course of a week our live lumber were shipped; they were driven to the boats, each man having his left shackled to another man's right leg: they were thin, depressed, and sulky, yet tractable. They had been driven from the interior some hundreds of miles, and the irons had in many cases worked through the skin and produced angry and dangerous sores.

But the inflexible cruelty of the owners never for a moment relaxed. To them time was money; they knew nearly to a day when ships for human victims would be at Loango, and they hurried along the healthy and the sickly, the sound and the wounded, the fresh and the jaded, at the same remorseless rate. They were all naked—not even the slightest covering to their emaciated limbs, and their food was scanty and precarious.

To such an absolute drug is human life reduced on this barbarous coast, that when the British legislature endeavoured to drop the shackles of tyranny from the limbs of the slave, the owners of this (by us thought illegal) property, finding that our ships and those of Spain did not arrive for the accumulated cargoes, rather than return them to the place whence they came, or run the risk of liberating the poor negroes, or be at the very trifling expense of their food and their security, actually murdered—yes, cruelly, wantonly murdered the slaves, and left their bones piled in heaps as the memorial of their infamy and the record of the deed! Men and women, the aged and the infant, the sickly and the healthy, were all murdered!

While the English nation were with the best of feelings extolling the Christian-like conduct of Mr. Wilberforce, and lighting an eternal halo of glory round his head, they little thought that the consequences of their voted liberty would be to ensure so long a release from slavery by sending such numbers to that place* "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Among our cargo of three hundred, there were fifty women, or rather females; of these fifty, about thirty were between the ages of twelve and twenty. At the former age the sex are women, and at the latter they are verging on towards the down-hill of life—that is, as far as personal charms are concerned. I soon found that these victims were destined to experience all the brutal assaults of the sailors. The captain selected a very young and a very well-formed creature for his occasional companion; she was soon dismissed, and he chose another: and the sailors, as either passion or caprice suggested, changed the objects of their temporary affections. The men were confined below, a kind of landing of planks having been placed so as to enable them to lie down at discretion; without having their limbs hurt by the inequalities of the hold. They seemed indifferent as to pain, and when released in order to benefit by the air, they looked about in stupid astonishment: even the working of the ship, when we put to sea, excited no surprise; they were sick, and, like other people in sea-sickness, seemed to be above all care. Not so the women; they soon became gay, and apparently satisfied.

This promiscuous society was not denied to the captain's son: his inherent disposition to tyranny had full scope; his amusement was to pull the little girl's curly hair, and make remarks upon her different intonations of voice as he either gently extracted two or three at a time, or forcibly possessed himself of a handful. They kindly offered me one of these purchased victims, but I civilly declined so handsome a proposition.

We put to sea as soon as a sufficient quantity of provisions was procured for our live-stock, and stood to the north-

* His majesty's ship Primrose was sent to Loango, to endeavour to stop the trade, and her officers saw the piles of human bones, and were told the circumstance and the reason of the murders.

ward of the equator, in order to take the trade wind. The women were now more engaging, inasmuch as they were dressed: if we had continued in the fashionable garb of Eden, I doubt if one-half the crime would ever have been committed of which we daily and nightly hear. When curiosity cannot be excited, we are shortly satiated.

I had double allowance of work; I had two ladies and two gentlemen to attend upon, and the ladies, from awkwardness in managing either forks or spoons, gave me quite sufficient employment, especially in the vicinity of the equator. We had been at sea about eight days, when a man, who had been sent aloft to repair the clew of the fore topgallant sail, called out,

"On deck, there!"

"Halloo!" was responded by the mate.

"Here's a strange sail about three points on the lee-bow."

The captain was instantly on deck, and, taking a glass in his hand, he jumped aloft in the fore-topsail yard: for a few minutes he seemed undecided. We were on the larboard tack close-hauled, and the stranger, whose canvass had a large spread, and whose yards were very square, was standing on the starboard tack under easy sail. The wind was light and variable, and our royals only were asleep; indeed, the motion of the ship slightly discomposed their slumbers.

While the captain endeavoured to make out the stranger, a degree of curiosity and fear was discernible in the crew; but when, after a short pause, he called out, "There go her royals aloft!" it required no one to call the ship's company into activity. "Down with the helm!" said the captain, and in a very short space of time we were standing on the same tack as the stranger, with every stitch of sail the Rapid could show. We were not long in discovering that the vessel astern was in chase of us; she was soon under skysails, and rose us a little. If ever the Rapid could have escaped, it was now; she was not deep in the water, and we had rather a better air than our rival, for our skysails drew well, and we were going about three knots through the water—a rate which we scarcely thought possible to be effected by the other vessel. While every man on board imagined the ship gained upon us, I alone thought the contrary: the fact was, they dreaded the reality, I hoped it.

It was however evident that, allowing the breeze to continue as it did, we could not be boarded before ten o'clock at night, even if we hove-to: the captain therefore gained confidence in the assurance that darkness would befriend him, more especially as the moon did not rise until eleven o'clock, and generally after sunset the breeze freshened.

As pirates were as common as English men-of-war on the coast, Captain Smith began to make preparations for the worst. We had eight guns, and were well fitted, in every respect, either to fight or to run away. Screens were nailed up, in order to prevent the sparks from the firing getting below. The hatches were placed, and all precautions taken to hinder the slaves from being troublesome during the action; but it always occurred to me, that if the hatches were battened down, a lingering suffocation must have ensued. The women, who, with feminine curiosity, had watched the countenances of the sailors, as they spoke of the probable result, and who began to be troublesome, as all curious people must be, were confined on the foremost part of the lower deck, and were told to keep quiet—a very useless order, which nature seemed to have privileged women to disobey. No monkeys in their wildest state ever chattered more rapidly than did these poor creatures when they were placed in confinement, and when no satisfactory reason could be given for such thraldom. But negroes are unlike other men; they bear misfortune's worst pinch without complaining; and as from their births they have been slaves, one to another—the worst of all slavery—they only consider a relaxation from labour a pleasure; and therefore, when the women found that they could lie down and sleep, they soon forgot their grievances, and did, quite unintentionally, as they were desired.

It was four o'clock in the evening; the wind had freshened a little, and the Rapid was going about four knots, when the captain observed that the stranger evidently lost ground; and he ordered, as we had a fresher breeze, that the helmsman should keep the ship a point and half free, in order to gain a greater distance from our pursuer before dark. The fore-topmast and the top-gallant studdings were instantly set, and by seven o'clock, when the day began to draw towards a close, the stranger's topsail yards were hardly discernible from the deck. A smile of contentment

played over the rugged features of the sailors, when darkness followed, and we lost sight of our unwelcome neighbour.

Half an hour after the night had established itself, the studdings were hauled down, the Rapid brought close to the wind, and tacked. I overheard the captain say to the mate that the stranger was an English sloop of war, and that in all probability she would, seeing that her chase had set her studding-sails before dark, imagine that it was our intention to bear up, and perhaps do the same herself, taking the chance of cutting us off. In the mean time the wind freshened, our sails were proportionably reduced, and the Rapid was striding along at a considerably increased pace. At eleven o'clock the hands were turned up to shorten sail, and every stitch of canvass was taken off the brig and furled; every light was extinguished, even to the binnacle, and the captain with his night-glass, and the mate with a looking-glass, kept sweeping the horizon to leeward. About one o'clock, the captain thought he saw a vessel on the lee-beam; but in spite of every endeavour he could not again catch her. At two o'clock we made sail, and crowded on all we could bear, keeping her two points free: the wind was now fresh, and the sea began to get up a little.

A very considerable anxiety was manifested as it drew towards daylight; men were placed on each top-gallant yard, and warned, as the day broke, to keep a good look-out all round. The captain was on deck,—indeed he had never been below; and the mate, who had rolled himself in a sail abaft, came from his roosting-place as the light grew stronger.

"Main top-gallant yard there!" said the captain.

"Sir," was answered.

"Look well round on each quarter, and keep a good look-out."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Do you see any thing from the fore top-gallant yard?" asked the mate.

"Nothing, sir, nothing."

"Look well down to leeward about in the direction of that small cloud."

The man turned his head in that direction, but replied that "he could not see any thing like a strange sail."

It was far from a clear morning; on both quarters the clouds were heavy, and the weather all around indicated our approach into the trade winds again. Daylight was fairly established; the stranger was not in sight; and the captain had given directions to shape a course he had previously steered before the chase commenced; when the man on the main top-gallant yard called out, that "there was a vessel on the weather quarter." At this moment, a thick cloud, which had settled apparently on the water, rose like the curtain of a theatre, and a ship was seen standing as it were out of the fog: she was on the same tack and steering the same course as ourselves, both vessels having the wind on the larboard beam. The stranger was about ten miles distant; her lower yards were plainly visible; and when she rose to the sea, we could distinguish below the reef-points of her courses.

"It is the same," said the captain; "make all sail, my lads; we have nothing left for it now but our legs."

"I thought," said the mate, as he came aft when the sails were all set, "I thought he would play us that trick; when first he saw us, we were steering this course, and when it came dark, he either shortened sail, or after standing on two hours he tacked, and kept a little free. There goes his studding-sails," he continued, as he looked through the glass; "she looks large enough to be a frigate."

"She looks larger than she is," replied the captain, "but, frigate or no frigate, she is quite large enough to walk off with us: keep the men quite quiet, and make all the slaves lie down. Do you think, mate, we are in good trim?"

"Pretty fair, sir; but perhaps if we bring her a little more by the stern, she might do better."

"Then we will wait and see," replied the captain; "but send a hand aloft, and clap a preventer main-topsail brace on: we must hold on if it blows great guns and small arms; and I am mistaken if we don't give him a good long chase before he overhauls us entirely."

The captain's black wife and Master Smith's black mistress did not appear at breakfast. In short, I had nearly a holyday; for, as the order was to keep every one quiet and below, I took the liberty of obeying it strictly.

By eleven o'clock the stranger was hull-up. She gained upon us rapidly, and although the Rapid was going nine

and a half, the decreased distance seemed visible every half-hour.

We now edged away about a point, and began to lighten the vessel; the guns were thrown overboard, to my great satisfaction, and some useless lumber soon floated away astern. It was now a doubt if the stranger gained upon us; a stern chase is always a long one, and by the edging away above-mentioned she was directly in our wake.

At noon the breeze moderated a little, but still the stranger evidently neared us. She was under all sail she could crowd, and we could distinctly see the water as it broke upon her bows. I was in ecstasies. Every time I looked I saw my deliverer closer and closer, and began to think that fortune, having tamed me into subjection, by having placed me as cabin-boy, was now inclined to turn her wheel in my favour.

Captain Smith was one of the most fearless, heartless men the world ever saw. He was desperately brave, and always foremost in any danger or difficulty; his crew knew him well, and, like all seamen, they overlooked his bad qualities in remembering his courage. He was by no means an idle man; he was always employed about something useful: he did not trust the mate with the navigation; he was his own captain, master, and boatswain, and never sent a man where he feared to go himself; but now, all the devil of his composition came to light. The stranger gained upon us. She was not more than two gun-shots distant; the breeze seemed to favour her in strength; in short, four hours more would have seen the Rapid a prize, had not something been done—that something was now about to be tried. The mate and captain were in earnest conversation abaft; the lightning of the latter's eye seemed to dazzle the mate into subjection; but still there was a reluctance about the countenance of the mate which would not entirely yield. I heard him say, "But if we are taken, after doing it, what will become of us all? We shall be hung, sir, we shall be hung." I certainly could not help saying to myself, "Please God and a strong rope."

"It is a chance, and the only chance," said the captain, "and no one will care a pin about the business if we get away."

"Oh yes," said the mate, "if we could only get away.

Why, to be sure, I should not be so slack in stays myself, but that confounded vessel sails well, and we are evidently losing ground fast."

"Well," said Smith, "let the worst be the worst, that is, our capture and the fore-yard arm. I will be responsible since you fear; and seeing, as I do, that the taking of the Rapid is at once the downfall of myself and family, I am resolved to have one chance more of escape. If we can go on until night, the frequent squalls may allow us to try another manœuvre, which may prove more fortunate than our last; and if the bait does not tempt sufficiently, why we are only saving one or two human beings from a life of misery."

"Well," said the mate, "I'm agreed.—Forward there," said he.

"Sir," answered a rough-looking fellow.

"Jump down," said the captain, "and hoist up one or two empty casks, and send the cooper aft with his tools."

"Ay, ay, sir," responded the man with all the indifference of a sailor.

The cooper soon made his appearance; in five minutes the empty casks were on deck, the heads of both were taken out, and the cooper set to work to cut out a circle large enough for a man's neck. The mate, who was a handy fellow of all work, began at one cask, and the captain stood by, urging the workmen to use every despatch. The breeze had freshened, and we held our own pretty well with the stranger; at any rate I was fearful that she did not gain upon us very rapidly. In the mean time, both cooper and assistant worked away with the greatest indifference, and no human eye could have detected the slightest variation of countenance in the mate, although he was fully aware of the desperate act about to be committed. When the casks were ready, the upper hoops were taken off, so as to allow the cooper to place the heads in when required. A pig of iron ballast was fastened in each cask, and then it was that the mate said in a firm voice:—

"Now, sir, we are ready. If you are still determined, d—n me if you shall ever say that John Collins was afraid when death was at hand."

The captain's son had been all along watching the movements of the cooper, but was quite in ignorance of the in-

tention of his father. Once indeed he asked what was the hole cut in the head of the cask for; but he was told to be silent, in a tone of voice which set me shaking like a monkey in frosty weather.

"Bring one of the slaves upon deck," said the captain; "and, do you hear? pick out a lively and a slim one."

The slave was brought unshackled upon deck: he looked round him with surprise, and yet with indifference; his eye was sunken from care and from sickness, and his poor emaciated form had qualified him to come forward in the capacity alluded to.

"He's the liveliest we can find, sir," said one of the seamen; "for he was the only one who was talking, and I fancy he is as slim as any of the rest; but for that matter we shall have no trouble to find another."

By this time, about ten of the crew had assembled about the mainmast, curious to see what was to be done. The slave was told by signs to get into the cask, which he endeavoured to do; but he was so long in the limbs that he could not sit down in the bottom as he was desired. To effect this a little manual labour was applied by the bystanders, but ineffectually; for the slave was so stiff from the exertion of walking, and from the hardness of his resting-place, that the attempt was abandoned.

"Oh," said young Smith, "if you want a person to get into the cask, try young Ganjam. He is small enough, and supple enough, or else I have worn my colt out to no purpose."

The mate looked at the captain. The eye spoke volumes; and little did I know at that moment that my life was hanging on the thin thread of Captain Smith's conscience.

In the mean time young Smith had seized me by the collar of the shirt, and had placed me by the side of the cask. The mate looked at me, as if measuring my height, and then at the captain, signifying by his glance that I should do very well; and said he,

"White might be more sure than black. Here, youngster, jump in here, and let us see how tall you are."

Not knowing and not imagining the intention, I got into the cask, and by means of much exertion I sat down exactly as was required, my neck just coming in a line with the mark for the head of the cask. Even the sailors, who

up to that moment had no idea of the captain's intentions, grinned, and said that I was made for the cask, and sat in it as snug as any lady who ever was hoisted in. That remark saved my life.

Captain Smith, who seemed absorbed in thought, and who looked like a man screwing up his courage to desperation, suddenly broke his long silence, and merely said,

"No, no! not him."

"Oh then," said his son, "try my black wife."

"Ah!" ejaculated the captain.

"That would do just as well," said the mate; "so bring her aft, here; you're not the first in the world who would like to get so sure a divorce."

Away went that incarnate devil, and in two minutes he was seen lugging along his miserable victim by the hair of the head: one or two more of that sex came on deck, but were instantly sent below again.

"Here, you Ganjam, jump in the cask, and show this young lady how she is to sit, for none but the devil can talk the negro language."

I did as I was desired, and then got out again. The girl was then told to do as I had done; but she hesitated, as if warned by some unseen power of the danger which awaited her. As she could not succeed the first time, I was desired to place her properly, which I did. The cooper was told to fix her head in, fitting the part about her neck.

"Come, down with you," said the mate; "now, cooper, fix on her necklace, and take care it does not fit too tight, for she is going into strange company."

The remorse of conscience which had at first exhibited itself in this worthy associate of the captain's had entirely vanished: like many others who, having made one false step, from that instant fly to the other extreme. Thus we not unfrequently see women whose virtues have been sacrificed, suddenly assume the open countenance of vice, and, from being modest and reserved, become shameless and impudent.

The last stroke of the mallet had driven home the upper hoop of the cask; the poor girl, who imagined, perhaps, that some kind of amusement was to follow, kept laughing and smiling, and vainly endeavoured to make us understand her delight, as she poured forth a volume of words. The

captain had walked aft and called the mate: the stranger had evidently gained so much that in two hours she would have had us under her guns; and, after remarking this aloud, the former said, "Well, it is our only alternative; but, used as I am to scenes of horror, I cannot bear to see a person smile when such a chance awaits them."

"The stranger," said the master, "is right astern, and it is impossible for them not to see the cask; now let us see if *their* Christian charity can overcome their love of prize-money. If you intend to do it, we have no time to loose."

"Do it!" said the captain.

The mate walked to the gangway, and cut the cask close to the side. It was now that the poor imprisoned wretch imagined her destiny; she gave a shriek so loud and piercing that every slave below startled at the sound, and, ere she could continue her loud cry for mercy, the mate and one of the seamen had lifted the cask clear of the side, and vibrating it once and twice, the third time they relinquished their grasp, and the poor creature, who had been sold to enrich others, now found herself the victim for their security.

The cask,* when it fell into the water, twirled round and round with fearful rapidity, but, owing to the ballast, it always kept end up, leaving the girl's head plainly visible. Her eye, whenever the twirl of the cask allowed it to rest on the ship, had more of imploring mercy than the words of the most frightened convict; she screamed for pity—alas! pity was not known to those who had purchased her life;—flight, safety was the only thought which occupied her half-murderer's mind. The freshness of the breeze, the noise occasioned by the rapidity of the vessel's way, soon predominated, and the shriek of the negro girl was lost in the distance. The eyes of the crew now rested on the cask; the captain kept his glass steadily fixed on what the mate called the water-nymph, and a quarter of an hour would decide the fate of the girl, the Rapid, and the captain. Then was conjecture at its utmost. The cask, being small, appeared at a greater distance than the stranger, and as, from

* The whole of the following story is founded on fact. It was H. M. S. the Eden, I believe, that picked up the negroes turned adrift as is related.

the slight variation in steering and the send of the sea, the cask was to leeward of the vessel, it was imagined that either the negress had passed unseen, or was left to inevitable death, the spirit of gain having predominated over the spirit of charity. But it was only the fears of the villains which could have harboured such an idea; for sailors are generally the most humane beings alive, and when a woman is concerned, they would risk more than almost any of the biped race.

While the mate was cursing the unsuccessful scheme, and the captain was meditating some further rascality, the royals, courses, and flying-jib of the stranger were suddenly seen shaking, and then instantaneously reduced; the ship was brought to the wind and hove-to, and the lee-quarter boat was lowered. Then it was, for the first time, that we made out our pursuer to be an English sloop of war, for she hoisted her colours, perhaps to inspire courage in the negress, or to make her understand that she was discovered.

"There's shorten sail and heave-to," said the mate, jumping at the same time in ecstasies; "we are safe now: let's send adrift another directly; it will take her ten minutes at least before blacky and the boat are hoisted up, and in this way we can continue to regain our lost ground until dark."

"Hand up a live log for a swim," said another of the crew: they all saw their safety secured by the plan; another victim, a small man, was consigned to the waves. Two more casks were brought up and got ready, and it was determined to continue launching one at a time until sunset. The manifest indifference of the negroes, and their little attempt at resistance, was quite wonderful; only in one case out of eight did the mate find any opposition, and that was but momentary. The black looked round for his companions who had been brought up before him, and it was supposed that in his search he saw the cask which was occupied by a victim floating astern; but, the instant he became violent, they seized him, lashed his hands behind him, and, by way of giving him consolation, threw two overboard together, one close by the side of the other.

The distance gained by this plan was immense; it was calculated that we had dropped the sloop about six miles, for she saw every cask and hove-to to pick it up, and then made all sail again; but, although she must have steered latterly

close to the negro, and had her boat ready and her hands on deck, yet she never was fairly in pursuit again under ten minutes or a quarter of an hour.

The night was now fast approaching, already the stranger was scarcely visible, and every preparation was made to effect another manœuvre; the wind came in squalls of rain, which generally lasted about twenty minutes, and then was followed by a lull, or a partial cessation of wind. No sooner had we lost sight entirely of the sloop, than the studding-sail booms were rigged out, the studding-sails hoisted on the yards, and when the next squall of wind and rain came, we bore up right before it, set every inch of canvass we could carry, extinguished all lights, and made the vessel as light as possible by again throwing over some ballast.

The captain had well judged his time. Fortune, they say, favours the brave; she not unfrequently favours the villain; and the devil, who must be one of fortune's chief mates upon some occasions, as Lord Byron says,

> ——"Very often waits,
> And leaves old sinners to be young ones' baits."

On this occasion never was fortune so conspicuous; the squall lasted for more than an hour, and when the wind abated, a thick drizzly rain continued until two o'clock in the morning. We had been running eight knots an hour, and we bore up at nine o'clock, so that we were forty miles from the parallel on which we had been sailing. When the weather cleared up, we could not distinguish any stranger; but we still continued carrying all sail right before the breeze until daylight.

The day broke beautifully clear, and scarcely had the first streak of light exhibited itself on a small cloud above the horizon, when the sun seemed to follow. Far as the eye could reach no object was visible; the horizon was without a speck which a telescope could enlarge into a ship; but the dreary waste of waters was a paradise to the captain, who now found himself, by the lucky thought of an attempted murder, free from the admiralty-court and the sloop-of-war. But fortune was not always in so kind a mood as she had been; to me she was ever an enemy, for whenever she smiled upon my tyrants she frowned upon me.

Although the rankest villany may sometimes prosper,—although the perjurer, the thief, nay, the murderer, may escape, yet the hounds of justice, though slow, are generally sure; and if they are at fault, the wretch who has borne about him an eternal hell, and who, perhaps, dies unsuspected in his bed, having cheated the gallows, suffers ten thousand times more from the fierce attacks of conscience and of fear, than if the law had received its due, and the hootings of an enraged populace had been the last sound which greeted the dying ear. It was said by a celebrated forger, perhaps the most successful in his trade, that the happiest moment of his life was when the officers of justice arrested him: therefore, let no one think that the man who is known to be a villain, although by the base perjuries of others he escaped in his guilt, is happy; nor let any one envy him whose riches are the result of extortionate gain, or his wealth been procured by illicit and illegal practices.

The time was not far distant when I was to be an eye-witness that heartless villany and rapacity unman the heart, and make a man a coward; that event, the awful retribution of Providence, shall occupy another chapter. In the mean time we must be left on the calm waters; for, by running so far to the southward, we had again run out of the trades, and were in the Dolderums.

CHAPTER V.

Shylock.—When it is paid according to the tenor,
It doth appear, you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Has been most sound.—*Merchant of Venice.*

Banana's heart sank within him when he found he could get no satisfaction for the impertinent intrusion of Mr. Noakes; for Banana hated every attorney with a hate only known by those who have been the victims of their base plunder. He considered them as so many hawks ready to pounce upon their prey, who never had any thought but of

their six-and-eightpenny charges, and who cared for nothing but the prospect of a lawsuit, with the regular gradations from the original writ through the phalanx of plunder, under the heads of arrest—declaration—pleadings—issue—verdict—judgment—execution—and *costs!* Under this feeling of abhorrence to the land-sharks, he most carefully avoided any act likely to bring him under the hands of his enemies; and it was for this reason that he never would embark a farthing of his property in either lands or tenements, for then some lawyers, some conveyancers, and some wormwood, that is, attorneys, must have made a profit out of his bargain. "No, no," said Banana, "let me have my money in the funds, and then I have no tithes to go to law about, no damages of hedges and ditches to be made good, no tax-gatherer, and no attorneys—d—n them! I should," said the irritable gentleman, "once have bought a place which I much coveted, because a favourite sister resided there for many years, and I went down actually to purchase it. I dined with some of my neighbours, and, after an animated discourse upon Swedish turnips and mangel-wurzel, the conversation turned upon a law-suit then pending between my host and one of his neighbours; from which it appeared that a cow belonging to my friend had strayed upon the ground of his neighbour. The cow had done some very trifling damage, and the neighbour, who was one of those thorns which sometimes flourish to the destruction of every flower about them, determined to go to law to recover about eight times the amount of damages actually sustained. The attorney, who sat by his side, and who professed to be an honest man, advised my host by all means to defend the action, because of the uncertainty of the law, and likewise of the difficulty of swearing to the trespasser. 'But,' said he, 'I am bound as a lawyer and as an *honest* man to tell you, that a person is answerable, not only for his own trespass, but that of his cattle; for if by negligent keeping they stray upon the land of another and tread down the herbage, or commit other injury, this is a trespass, for which the owner must answer in damages.'—'Must he?' said I; 'then good-night, my worthy sir. I would rather live in the Deccan than among such gentlemen,' and I came to town the next day."

Banana, being ejected from his snug rooms in Half-moon-

street, resolved to move a little farther off from Ganjam, and accordingly he began to search about in the vicinity of Baker-street. He was not long in finding some rooms exactly suited to his taste and his price, and he actually had agreed to take them, when one of the unfortunate gentleman's whims drove him out again to search for quarters.

"Very nice lodgings," said Banana, "very nice indeed: what is your rent, Mrs. Morris?"

"We generally," answered Mrs. Morris, "ask two guineas and a half; but as you are a single gentleman, without any encumbrances, we shall only take two guineas of you."

"I really am very much obliged to you, Mrs. Morris, but I am not in the habit of giving less than the thing is worth, and I happen to have some encumbrances."

"Dear me, I beg your pardon," said Mrs. Morris, "I thought you said you had no servants, or wife, or children."

"None, none," ejaculated Banana; "none, thank God, excepting one of the latter, which is in the Foundling. I meant, by encumbrances, luggage—trunks, fiddle-cases."

"Oh, sir," said Mrs. Morris, dropping a courtesy, "we call those things furniture; we only call women and children encumbrances, because they are always in the way."

"Well, Mrs. Morris, I suppose," said Banana, "we are quite agreed as to the terms: you can cook a beef-steak for me, eh? or boil a potato if requisite, eh?"

"Happy, sir, I am sure, to do every thing for you in my power; you won't find this side of the street too hot, I think, sir."

"No fear of that, Mrs. Morris; I am just come from the most delightful country in the whole world, where we have every amusement and luxury; where the sun always shines; the weather is always fine; and when we find ourselves inclined to sleep, we have people about us to make us fall into that happy state immediately."

"Dear me, sir," said Mrs. Morris, "I'm sure I beg your pardon, but I should think that the fewer people you had about you, the easier it would be to sleep."

"Quite a mistake," said Banana, "quite a mistake, Mrs. Morris; if you will just lie down upon that sofa for a few moments, I will show you how we manage to set a person to sleep."

Mrs. Morris's maidenly manners were a little startled at this proposition of my uncle Banana's, and she said, "I think, sir, if you were to lie down yourself you would be able to show me just as well."

"Just as well," said Banana, "just as well, Mrs. Morris. Look here," said he, throwing himself upon the sofa; "now you must come and press your hands gently all over me."

"Good God! sir," cried Mrs. Morris, "what do you take me for?"

"Why, for a woman, to be sure," said Banana, taking hold of her hand, and pressing it to his leg; "there, Mrs. Morris, in this manner; it is the most delightful sensation in life."

"For shame, sir!" said Mrs. Morris, blushing a deep scarlet; "I really wonder you are not ashamed."

"Ashamed!" said Banana, starting up, "why, d—n it, madam, I only wanted you to shampoo me."

"Sham what, sir?" replied Mrs. Morris; "I wonder what kind of name that is indeed!" and bouncing out of the door, she continued—"Sham-poh, indeed! sham-poh! I wish my brother was at home—sham-poh!"

Out came Banana, trailing behind an old cotton umbrella, which he had caught up by mistake, and which Mrs. Morris very shortly missed, and espied forming my uncle's tail: down stairs she came, foaming at the mouth, and rushing into the street, ran up to my uncle. "For shame, sir, for shame, to insult an elderly woman, like me, and then to take my umbrella!"

Banana dropped it, as briskly as a boy does a hot potato. "D—n your umbrella, ma'am," said he.

"Ah, very pretty manners indeed, sir!" said Mrs. Morris, whose active tongue began to exercise itself with greater rapidity; "very pretty manners, sir, for a man of your age to come into an honest woman's house to pretend to take her apartments, to insult her, to want to sham-poh her, and then to take her umbrella, and then to d—n her; I'd sham-poh you, if I was a man, that I would."

Banana heard no more of the thunder of the tongue, or "of the tell-tale woman railing at the Lord's anointed." Away he ran as hard as he could; and in no very quiet humour, and none the cooler for the rating and the run, he arrived at Ganjam's house. He rapped as lustily as if the

bailiffs were after him and in sight; and had hardly permitted himself time to comb his hair, a service he never allowed to escape if he had one unperceived moment, when he darted into the drawing-room. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, nearly dark, and Ganjam was sitting by the fireside alone, Mrs. and Miss Ganjam not having returned from their shopping excursion.

"Ah, Banana, how are you? what brought you here so early?"

"My legs," retorted Banana, "and I should have been here ten minutes sooner if they could have conveyed me more quickly. Oh! what an unfortunate man I am! I never know a moment's peace. Here have I been nearly mobbed and pumped upon, hooted and abused, for merely showing an old weather-beaten, wrinkled hag how to shampoo a gentleman. Why are people such barbarians in this enlightened country as not to know what shampooing a gentleman is? Oh that I were back again in Java! Here's a precious climate, dark as night at half-past four o'clock, with a fog rising enough to suffocate a Mexican: any man who ever lived on a mountain could not inhale this cursed yellow stuff one sips in under the general denomination of air."

"I have got something else for you to sip in, Banana," said Ganjam, with the most provoking coolness, "something that must please you even more than Madeira; but for fear of driving you quite mad, I shall keep back the nuisance until after dinner. By-the-by, Banana, I feel very uneasy about my son Robert; it is now ten days since he left us, I have not had a letter from either Ruffle or himself, and I saw by the papers that the Saturn sailed before he could possibly have arrived at Plymouth."

"Of course," said Banana, "nothing ever goes right in this villanous country: the boy was suffocated in the coach, or has been kidnapped on board a collier, or perhaps is drowned or upset, or living, as midshipmen generally do, with half a dozen companions of another sex."

"Job's comforter with a vengeance!" sighed Ganjam; "but I shall have my turn after dinner, and I promise you I will repay you in your own coin."

At this moment Mrs. and Miss Ganjam entered the room, and, after the usual salutation to Banana, for he was much too punctilious to address familiarly even his own sister, Mrs.

Ganjam entered upon the subject nearest her heart—her son.

"I am glad to say," she began, "that the evening papers announce the arrival of the Saturn at Plymouth, having been forced in by stress of weather. To-morrow we shall get some intelligence, for Ruffle never failed to write on his arrival, and now he will be doubly inclined to correspond."

"He is a sound-hearted sailor," said Ganjam; "I have known him all his life; he never has forgotten some trifling civilities I showed him at Madras, and very unlike he is, thank God, to Sir John Grogam, who lived in my house when he was a midshipman,—nay, whenever the service would permit he resided with me; but, such is the general gratitude of mankind, when I asked him to take my son under his protection, for he is now high up in his profession, he sends me back one of those formal straight-forward letters which correspond to Shakspeare's description of life, being 'full of sound and emptiness, meaning nothing.'"

"Oh, gratitude!" said Banana; "I only knew one grateful person in my life, and he hung himself because he could not pay his debts; so that he did the most ungrateful act in the world, for I lost both my money and my friend."

"I dare say," said Miss Ganjam, "that Robert, like all boys, was so taken with the novelty of his situation, that he forgot to follow Captain Ruffle's directions as to writing, and to-morrow or next day we shall get some account of our sailor."

"I am sure, my dear Jane," said her father, "I hope so; but I have had some awkward fears that all is not right; and yet Roberts declares he saw him actually in the coach, and that he recommended him to the care of an elderly lady: if the coach had been upset, our echoes of every noise, the newspapers, would have given us intelligence."

"Banana," said Mrs. Ganjam, "of course you intend to wait and dine with us?"

"A broad hint to be off," replied the unfortunate man; "it's evident you did not expect me to stay, by your having put the question in that manner. I never intrude my company, I assure you, Mrs. Ganjam."

"Why, Banana, you must be as mad as a dog in July," replied Ganjam; "you know very well that there is always

a knife and fork at my table for you, until you accommodate yourself with an establishment."

"And not after it, of course," replied Banana, catching at the comma to cut in, "and therefore you have given me the hint. I shall take it, be assured; I shall not trouble you with my company much longer."

"My dear Benjamin," said Mrs. Ganjam, "why be so unkind as to imagine such an incivility, if it were nothing else?—why believe me capable of harbouring such a wish towards one I always loved?"

Banana's pride went down to zero: never was there a man of better heart, and never was there a man more touchy and more irritable.

"Well," said Ganjam, "my dear Banana, you may growl just as long as you feel inclined, and dine here or not, just as you please. I know you to be one of the most fanciful of human creatures, and therefore leave you entirely to your own disposition."

"Well," said Banana, "then I shall dine here, but it is quite impossible not to have understood the hint—that is all I mean to say."

The hour previous to dinner passed in the heavy manner such hours always pass, when one party are occupied by thoughts peculiar to themselves, and the other party are thinking on quite another subject. Whenever a pause ensued, the word Robert was always ready to escape from either lady; while Banana invariably, during every pause, muttered the word shampoo, and followed it up with "unfortunate man." At length dinner was announced, and in no very animated manner the four relations sat down to table. A silence very unusual ensued, for Banana had generally some unfortunate accident to recount, and when once he started on so prolific a subject, he contrived to occupy an hour or so in groaning over his miserable existence.

"We shall hear to-morrow," said Mrs. Ganjam; "I am quite sure Ruffle will write."

The butler started at the words.

"Are you sure," said the father, "that the Saturn is arrived?"

"The evening papers announce it," replied his daughter, "and therefore we may depend upon the news being correct."

"Why, it is hardly worth their while to publish such a trifle as that without some authority," replied Ganjam; "but I should be sorry to pin my faith to the truth of any newspaper report. Roberts," continued he, addressing the butler, "are you quite sure you placed Master Robert in the right coach?"

"Certainly, sir," said the butler, with a smile, as much as to say, "just as if *I* could be mistaken."

"It certainly is very, *very* odd," said Mrs. Ganjam, "that we have not heard one word of, or from him."

"Master Robert hurt his hand when the guard shut the coach-door, and perhaps that may be the reason why he has not written," replied the butler.

"Why, I never heard that before," hinted Ganjam.

During the whole of dinner, Banana never said one word but shampoo, and that in a very low tone. Once, when the servant asked him if he should fill his glass with Madeira, poor Banana very innocently answered, "shampoo."

A presentiment of some unpleasant news seemed to prevail during the whole time of dinner; on other occasions hilarity and jokes contributed to render the repast more agreeable, but now each member was silent as a monument. Whenever Mrs. Ganjam did endeavour to break the tiresome monotony of silence, it was an evident failure; it merely extracted a monosyllable in answer, and then followed a relapse. After the business of eating and drinking, by some termed the only comfort in life, was concluded, Mrs. Ganjam declared the drawing-room was so much warmer that she should make a hasty retreat. Jane willingly followed, thus leaving the two elderly gentlemen to make the best of their fears and forebodings.

"I cannot get over it," said Ganjam; "I have the most unaccountable heaviness of spirits I ever remember to have experienced; I am certain some calamity is about to occur. We are told over and over again of men being forewarned of their death; and others, at an immense distance from where the murder has been committed, have seen their friends, thus sacrificed, stalking about, either like St. Denis without his head, or with throats dreadfully lacerated. The Irish have their banshee; and who has not heard the death-watch affirmed? Nay, the raven has croaked out the unwel-

come intelligence, and nature has been convulsed when a king was murdered."

"I know," replied Banana, "that I was cruelly convulsed when the old woman refused to shampoo me. I cannot make out how it is that all these unfortunate circumstances only occur to me. If I get into a house, some unforeseen occurrence drives me out of it; if I buy a horse, I am sure to be cheated; and if I ask a woman to shampoo me, I am sure to be insulted. I wish to Heaven I was back again in Java."

"And if," replied Ganjam, "a lawyer writes to you, why, you must pay for it. I told you I would be revenged for all your Job's comfortings, so read this; and when you have delivered your usual anathemas upon the whole tribe, perhaps you will deliver me the amount which I have discharged."

"Oh," said Banana, "I hate reading letters after dinner. I make it a rule never to bother myself either with bills or brokers after the Stock Exchange closes."

"But, my dear Banana, the contents of that letter will amuse you amazingly. It is in reference to a subject next to your heart, saving always the shampooing, which certainly appears to be the only present occupant in your mind."

"Oh, something amusing," grumbled Banana: "well, let us have a look at it, then;" and forthwith he began in slow and solemn manner to unfold the letter. He started from the table, upsetting the wine, for which he instantly apologized, and lifting the letter close to the lamp which illumined the room, he hummed, hawed, and seemed suffering under the very disagreeable sensation of choking. At last—for these were indications of rough temper, as cats-paws on the water are signs of squalls—he gave one deep audible whew! and then out came his words as water bubbles from a bottle the moment the air is fairly established. It is a kind of trade-wind, which continues in steady force as soon as it has assumed its sway. Ganjam kept his eye fixed upon his victim: the corners of his mouth betrayed the inward satisfaction he experienced from the angry feeling of Banana, who had all his life boasted of never having paid a lawyer's bill, and now found himself suddenly called upon to discharge his temper and the account.

"May I never breathe another moment—" began Banana, when he was stopped by Ganjam, who kept saying,

"Whatever you do, Banana, keep your temper. Now, don't let your feelings get the better of your reason; keep your temper, and read the account."

"May I never breathe another moment, I say—"

"Stop, stop," said Ganjam, with the most provoking coolness, "stop, stop, my brother. Do keep your temper, and reason like a man. Remember what Milton says—

> 'Many are the sayings of the wise
> In ancient and in modern books enrolled,
> Extolling patience as the truest fortitude,
> And to the bearing well of all calamities.'"

"Curse Milton, and his fortitude, and his patience, and all but his calamities!" thundered Banana, who had waited with suppressed impatience, in order to avail himself of the first stop Ganjam should make to take breath. "Curse him, I say; and may I never breathe another moment!—and this is the third time I have got as far as this, when interruption prevented my saying a word more,—May I never breathe another moment, if, after this, I ever read, or receive, or pay a lawyer's bill! For forty years I have never taken physic or draught, and now—"

"Now," interrupted Ganjam, "you will have to give one; that's all the difference."

Here Banana held the letter about a yard from the tip of his nose, he being rather short-sighted, and holding it at arm's-length, read as follows:—

"Benjamin Banana, Esq.
To James Noakes."

"What do I owe James Noakes? I should like to know. Why, I never saw the rascal in all my life. What am I to pay him for?"

Here he read again.

"As to the business of Mrs. Wrathful."

"What! pay for Mrs. Wrathful's business!"

	s.	*d.*
"To attending you as to the business of serving a legal notice upon Mr. Benjamin Banana to quit your premises	0	6	8
"Long conference with yourself on the subject above mentioned	0	6	8
"Writing to Mr. Banana on the subject . .	0	5	0

"Attendance upon Mr. Banana with letter .	0	3	0
"Long attendance with Mr. Ganjam and Mr. Banana's solicitor	0	13	4

"Who's my solicitor? I should like to know," vociferated Bānana; "who is he? the devil or one of his imps? Who does he call himself? What is the rascal's name? Mr. what—Mr. Sneakam? This is infamous! This is most unchristian conduct, I do aver!"

"With you again on the subject of the above conference	0	6	8
"Calling at your house and finding you not at home	0	6	8

"That," said Banana, with a malignant grin, his hand shaking like a magnetic needle, "is the only charge I would willingly pay. I certainly would pay 6*s.* 8*d.* not to be at home whenever they called."

"For writing to Mrs. Wrathful, explaining the business	0	6	8
	£2	14	8

"Two pounds fourteen and eight-pence, because that old devil attempted to cheat me! Is this the boasted justice of England? Is it for this we hear of the purity of her laws? Is this law?—As sure as my name is Banana, the instant we ever have a peace, which certainly looks pretty distant, that moment I go abroad;—this is most scandalous!"

"Why, Banana," said Ganjam, "I should not wonder if you had an action entered against you for defamation of character, about that shampooing job to-day; that woman may force you to take her lodgings: you are quite at her mercy; you cannot be off because she refuses to shampoo you."

"Now, Ganjam, listen to me for a moment. It is said, or was said, or will be said, that the law, which was a dead letter, is now an open book. We are told, that in no country under the sun are the poor so well protected as in this

country. Now, will you tell me how a poor person is ever to obtain justice, when the defence of an action would be his ruin if he lost his cause? Why, at this rate, allowing the action to be to recover the sum of forty pounds, the charges might actually amount to three hundred! How can a man of limited means run the risk of defending a cause, when such ruin might follow?"

"Oh!" said Ganjam, "now you speak like a reasonable man. There is no one subject so much talked of, and so grossly neglected, as our law and the means of obtaining justice. It is perfectly impossible for a poor man to have recourse to it; the very fees of court and counsel would eat up his whole annual earnings; and mayhap the man is not of a litigious temper, but is forced to defend the action, to save his family from certain ruin. It is, then, a choice of evils—but the choice is desperation. If a man does not plead 'in forma pauperis'—and no one who has twenty pounds would like that, for it is an old and a true saying, that the man who pleads his own cause has a goose for a client, which goose is sure to be plucked of his last feather—why, he must pay counsel's fees; he must employ more than one counsel, for the junior, as they term it, watches the case. To plead his own cause is to place ignorance to combat knowledge. So many are the niceties of the law, so many are the ways of evading justice, that flaws in the indictment,—the calling a man, although the man is identified, by a wrong Christian name—the mistaking the boundary of a parish—with fifty thousand other little quibbles, may lose the action. I remember once being in court when the counsel for the defendant had a letter which was in direct contradiction to the testimony given by the witness; the letter was written by the witness; the counsel turned it down in such a manner as only to show the signature, and he asked the witness, 'Is this letter in your handwriting?' 'It is,' said the witness. 'That is enough,' said the counsel, handing the letter to the clerk of the court, 'I shall make use of that by-and-by.' When it came to the defence, the counsel proposed to read the letter; upon which, up jumped the plaintiff's counsel, and objected to its production, 'Because,' said he, 'my learned friend ought to have questioned the witness as to the letter; but he cannot read that letter unless the witness is in the box.' The judge held to that

opinion—the cause was lost—the defendant had to pay 400*l.*—And why?—merely because a *form of law* prevented justice! I tell you, Banana—"

"Holloa!" said Banana, starting from the comfortable snooze in which he was indulging, with his back to Ganjam, and his feet nearly inside the grate, and who merely caught the words law, justice, and his own name; "what! more attorneys? more law? No no; I have heard quite enough of that;" and, jumping up, he darted out of the room, and ran up-stairs.

CHAPTER VI.

How oft a day which fair and mild appears,
Grows dark with fate, and mars the toil of years.
SIR WM. JONES.

BANANA's sudden entrance and the explanation for a moment seemed to brighten the countenances of the ladies; but the momentary smile soon gave way to the unusual sombre humour which seemed to hang like a pall over the family. The tea followed at the usual hour; but both the harp and piano missed the touches which made them worthy of being heard; and the voice which evening after evening had warbled its sweetness to their melody was for the present lost as to recreation and amusement.

"If I were to begin life again," said Banana, "I would be a sailor. Of all professions, that of sailors is the best. All their worldly cares are in a small space: they need have no thought as to their food or their occupations; both are provided for by the king or the captain; and certain it is, that after we have accustomed ourselves to our own society, we are not fond of the world or its fashions."

"Why, my dear uncle," replied Miss Jane, "I never heard you before so disposed to philosophize. Surely a sailor's life is a life of continual hardships and privation. They are separated from their friends; they are torn from their relations; their paths are trackless; and if in the many

changes and chances of this mortal life they escape unhurt, it is almost a bar to those honours for which they toil and fight, and labour and watch, during the best part of their days. It is a life constantly exposed to the world's basest ingratitude, and where the deserving and the assiduous are overtopped by the idle and the worthless, provided the former are poor and the latter rich."

"Very few rich men," said Ganjam, "are such fools as to join the navy; for, where a man can command, he is never very ready to be a slave. But the naval service of this country has both its advantages and its discomforts. I do not know if the remark is true that the greatest dunce in the family is sent to sea; but this I know, that boys of high mettle and daring spirit are always the youths who try that life of hardships. But if success follows the step, then no life is more pleasant, for they are kings—absolute monarchs; and true is the remark of a great philosopher, that the object of all men is to command."

Poor Mrs. Ganjam, who sat in a large arm-chair near the fire, and who was busily employed in the innocent recreation of knitting, gave a deep sigh as her husband finished the preceding sentence.

"Ah!" said she, "Robert was just the boy you have described. Rash, spirited, thoughtless; but he was generous and kind. I sadly fear his will be a life of misfortune and vexation; but if he returns with the virtues of the sailor, I can easily rub off the roughness of the diamond, and make him a polished jewel."

"Why," asked Miss Jane, "are sailors generally so liberal?" she being willing to turn to the favourable view, in order to dispel the grief which a tear or two had shown on the face of her mother.

"It is," said Banana, "because they are free from the world and the cursed shackles which fashion imposes. Here all is deceit; not a person approaches but is actuated by selfish motives; the very root of true friendship is dead, and consequently no one is willing to rush forward to assist the man who is known to be as hollow and as cold as a well. With sailors this is not the case; they form one of a small community, where the slightest breach of faith is recognised by the whole body, and where dishonesty cannot be screened;

hence, a mutual confidence is engendered, and he who acts liberally to his friend in distress knows that he may expect the same return."

"I think, brother Banana, that your argument goes to this: that self, in both sailor and soldier, seaman or landsman, is the ruling influence; that, even in the greatest act of liberality, the maxim of 'who gives to worth receives a benefit,' is never forgotten; and that therefore, while the right hand of friendship and assistance is offered, the left hand calculates the return with interest."

"The return, on shore," said Banana, chuckling at the conceit, "is of a very left-hand nature indeed, and is very often left in the lurch altogether; but circumstances have come under my notice, in which such uncommon generosity has been displayed that I am afraid to mention them, lest my veracity should be impugned. The hollow friendship of the world would scarcely credit what it would be almost ashamed to see held up as a kind of reprimand to its more fashionable habits."

"Well, thank God," said Ganjam, "I have lived long enough in this world to find out that true friendship may exist, although I readily admit it is very rarely found. But, brother Banana, methinks you should tell your tale of wonder and generosity, in order that we may benefit by the rough example, and prove by our praise that we are not blind to the good motives of others, or backward in rendering to honest liberality the applause it merits."

"Oh, my dear brother, do tell us some of these generous traits," said Mrs. Ganjam; "it will reconcile me in a certain degree to my son's profession when I find that it is not all heartless ingratitude; and as Jane seems but little disposed to run over the notes of either the piano or her voice, it will while away time, which for once seems to hang heavy, and give my heart a little ease before the hour of retirement arrives."

"It is a long and somewhat painful anecdote: it occurred on board the ship which conveyed me to India; and as both the actors are dead, I will endeavour to make the evening less heavy than my previous conversation has rendered it. But, as sailors say, I hate twisting long yarns, so do not be astonished if I break off in the middle; and if you fall asleep, as I did over Ganjam's digest of the laws after dinner, I as-

sure you I shall not be offended, but rather rejoice to find you in that state which will give a temporary relief from the unusual heaviness, I suppose, occasioned by my society."

"But, Banana," said Ganjam, screwing himself into an easy position, "mind this,—I object to any digression whatever; for if you get into a tiffoon or on an elephant's back, then away you go from the subject, and it will be midnight before we come to the middle part of the story."

"Agreed! agreed!" replied Banana; "stop me if I do, for I hate any thing of the kind; and moreover, never until now did I hear myself accused of any such thing; for if a man intends to tell a story, I think the best thing he can do is to get through it as rapidly as possible.—It was in the Straits of Malacca that the first unfortunate occurrence took place, for from the time we left the Thames until we arrived thus far on our voyage, we had been very lucky in our winds. As is customary on board Indiamen outward-bound, when we came into the warm latitudes, we enticed the young ladies who were bound to the market either in Calcutta or Madras, to dance during the evenings; we had sufficient music on board, and I assure you we passed our time pleasantly enough—as far as pleasure can exist in a ship, which keeps rolling about like a swing at a fair. We dined always about three o'clock, and the captain, who was about fifty years of age, always provided amply for his passengers. I remember his cook made macaroni particularly well."

Here a deep sigh came from the direction of Ganjam, who cast his eyes round towards his brother in the most pitiable manner, as much as to say, "What sin have I committed that I am doomed to bear this infliction?" Banana stopped short, and looked round; Ganjam had his finger in the usual position, his mouth moving about like a babe's at dinner, his eyes fixed upon Banana, but with a countenance so melancholy and so resigned that Mrs. and Miss Ganjam burst into a fit of laughter.

"This is too bad," said Banana, "I really am the most unfortunate man in the whole world; if ever I intend, or endeavour, to tell a plain matter-of-fact occurrence, I am interrupted by the sighs and groans of Ganjam, who sits jammed up in his chair like an automaton chess-player, and invariably makes it a rule to interrupt me by some indescribable noise or another." Here Banana was brought to a full stop in consequence of a loud rap at the street-door, and

while the wondering people guessed who the intruder could be, the servant ushered in Lieutenant Mizen.

The gallant officer, who would as soon have walked up to a cannon's mouth as he would have eaten his breakfast if duty called and honour prompted, seemed suddenly overcome in his resolutions, and advanced in the timid manner people always do who, not having been much accustomed to female society, unexpectedly find themselves in it. Ganjam had left his automaton position, and Banana, who was the very acme of politeness, had begun to bob his head like the figure of a mandarin in a tea-shop. The man-of-war was flat aback, as the sailors say, and before he could brace round, Ganjam had saved him half his preface, by begging to know to what circumstance he was indebted for having procured him the honour of this visit. Banana advanced a chair near the table, and Jane looked into the tea-pot, and gave evident symptoms of weakening the beverage.

"I believe," said Mr. Mizen, faltering a little as he broke ground, "that I have the honour of addressing Mr. Ganjam?"

"I am Mr. Ganjam," said the proper gentleman, advancing a little; "may I beg of you to be seated?" at the same time pointing to a chair.

Mizen made an advance, and then began to stammer out some words of acknowledgment, which kept hanging to his lips like icicles to a Russian's mustaches; at last, after backing and filling for a minute, the young lieutenant came to an anchor exactly in front of Jane's eyes: a kind of battery he was by no means prepared to face, the guns of which were very frequently directed towards him, and would have done more damage to the young lieutenant's heart, or, at least, made it palpitate quicker, than any eighteen-pounder, however well loaded and directed. Mrs. Ganjam, whose excessive fastidiousness of manners prevented her from asking the question she would have done, suggested some of that Chinese beverage, which had had time enough to become as bitter as aloes.

As the conversation had come to a full stop, and the lieutenant kept fumbling in his coat-pocket, it occurred to Banana, who always viewed mankind in the most suspicious light, that the intruder was one of those gentlemen who pay visits in order to extract money from the pockets of the quiet inhabitants, either by words or weapons. He therefore ran his eyes over the dress of Mizen, and, from his splashed

pantaloons and dirty boots, jumped at once to the conclusion that the lieutenant was no better than he should be: Banana made the most intelligible signals, for, by snapping his fingers, he indicated the probable result of the lieutenant's search. And then, by way of defence, he began to poke the fire—a liberty he hated any man to take in his own house, and which he very cautiously avoided in another's. He left the poker in the fire, and, standing with his back (an indelicacy he would have avoided under any other circumstances) towards his red-hot friend, looked on in no easy mind. "I think," said he to Ganjam, giving a very suspicious look at Mizen, "we want some more coals—shall I ring the bell?" and then, moving behind the lieutenant, he signalized his apprehensions.

"Poh! poh!" said Ganjam, coolly, "the room's as hot as an oven. I presume, Mr. Mizen, that you belong to the Saturn, and are just arrived in London?"

"Exactly so," replied the lieutenant; "and I am endeavouring to find a letter which Captain Ruffle desired me to deliver, and likewise to explain how I can be serviceable to your son."

"Oh then, all is right," ejaculated Mrs. Ganjam; "I hope, Mr. Mizen, my son will be pleased with the service he has chosen."

"It is rather a hard life at first," replied Mizen, "but a youngster soon grows accustomed to it; and I have no doubt your son will do as well as the rest of us: indeed, Captain Ruffle has spoken of him as a youngster of spirit and resolution, and these never fail to like the profession, and generally become ornaments of it."

Jane's eyes lighted up with expressive gratitude for Mizen's echo, as she imagined it, of Ruffle's opinion; all began to wear the countenance of satisfaction; and Ganjam, who held Ruffle's letter in his hand, and who never betrayed the smallest anxiety in the world, quietly placed it on the table, and continued the conversation.

"Keeping watch," said Ganjam, "during such cold foggy weather as this is, cannot be very agreeable or pleasant, I should imagine?"

"Why, sir," replied Mizen, "we do not think it so great a hardship as other people who are unaccustomed to it may imagine. We are broken in to it by degrees; for

when youngsters first come in the navy, the officer of the watch generally sends him to bed before half the time is expired: but," continued Mizen, whose shyness had gradually given way as he found himself more and more at home, "when we first enter the service, we consider it an honour to be placed in a watch."

"But," said Jane, who viewed the lieutenant's face as an index to a kind and feeling heart, "a boy of Robert's youth and inexperience is sure to find consideration; for it is justly said, that nothing is more gratifying to a sailor than to protect the weak and shelter the distressed."

Mizen bowed respectfully, and seemed to reflect back a slight tinge of crimson which rushed over Jane's face, and then again left it to its usual colour. "We never require more than a youngster can do; occasionally he gets a wet jacket, and every now and then his fingers are rather redder than a sheet of paper. But," continued Mizen, "I regret that I must be under the necessity of taking my leave suddenly, for Captain Ruffle has desired me to call on Tower Hill, and see if any more seamen are pressed for the Saturn."

"I hope, Mr. Mizen, you will do me the favour to breakfast here to-morrow, at half-past nine," said Ganjam: "for I wish much to speak to you concerning my son, and perhaps then your time will be more at your disposal."

"I shall be most happy," said the lieutenant; "and if I can contribute to the comfort of your son, I shall find an additional pleasure in so doing." Saying which, and bowing to Mrs. and Miss Ganjam, the hand of Mr. Ganjam was shaken, the bell rung, the door shut, and the family were left to themselves.

"You see," said Ganjam, "how people worry themselves in this world about nothing. Robert has forgotten his duty, and that is by no means uncommon, and you have unnecessarily shed tears for an imaginary evil."

"Oh, Ganjam," replied his wife, "I am sure I could shed more tears of happiness now than ever imaginary grief called from my eyes. I could have asked thousands of questions concerning Robert, and yet my heart misgave me, and I faltered in my intention. I dreaded to hear some slight insinuation, made doubly great from the mysterious look, the cautious expression, or the evasive answer. Surely, none can feel those painful sensations but a parent?"

"That is a very fine speech indeed," said Banana, "and if I had ventured upon such a sea of troubles, Ganjam would have given another deep sigh. But let us hear Ruffle's account of the boy; I expect to see him return as tractable as a mill-horse, although he went from home a very untamed colt."

Ganjam, who took every thing coolly, took his time to inspect the seal, and made some comments upon the armorial bearings of the Ruffles, while the ladies kept insinuating that it was nearly eleven o'clock, and that the discussion on heraldry might be kept for another occasion. At last, after various delays, the seal was broken, and Ganjam read as follows:—

"H.M.S. Saturn, Plymouth.

"DEAR GANJAM.

"Your son will make perhaps a very good sailor, but he will be a very indifferent traveller if he parts company with his portmanteau. He has occasioned me a world of uneasiness, as I have, ever since we sailed, been very anxious as to his safety. I thought I told you, that midshipmen were not allowed chests the size of those used by your honourable masters in Leadenhall-street to import their tea. I shall have it broken up, and make him get another. I have no time to write any particular details; but Mizen, my junior lieutenant, will call on you, and give you any information you may require. He may be of use in taking charge of your son, for he is a steady fellow, and very kind and obliging. I have only made one capture, a small privateer, and have experienced more bad weather than I remember for many years.

"My best compliments to Mrs. Ganjam. You may tell her that I will take every care of her young hopeful, and I dare say I shall be able to make something of him after a cruise or two, at this season of the year.

"Yours very truly,

"THOMAS RUFFLE."

"Well," said Banana, "I think that a very unsatisfactory letter indeed, and if my agent were to write to me in that manner, I should be very much inclined to appoint another. It is like a broker who says the stocks have fallen, but never gives the last quotation."

"I do not like the part which relates to Ruffle's uneasiness on Robert's account; and I more than fear he has not conducted himself with propriety," said Ganjam.

"Boys will be boys," remarked Jane; "and Nelson himself said that lads of spirit made always the best officers. Besides, Captain Ruffle seems to think he will do very well after a cruise or two. Dear little fellow! how I should like to see him in his uniform coat and sword."

"Oh! if you once get upon dress, you will gratify Ganjam amazingly. You will get plenty of sighs and groans from him; but it is time for me to retire, so good-night. I shall come to-morrow morning to hear Mr. Mizen's account of young Scapegrace." So saying, Banana bowed himself out of the room.

"Don't practise the fiddle, Banana," said Ganjam, "and remember not to ask any of the female servants to shampoo you. Good-night."

The party separated, and the curtains of repose were drawn over the bed of sleep. The morrow soon came, for those who slumber well are sad reckoners as to time, and the waste of half-life vanishes truly like a dream. Mizen, like all good officers, was punctual as to time. No one circumstance tends more to forward the views of a public man in life than punctuality. That man does more in one day from a system, than the frivolous and careless, as to minutes, get through in a year. Ganjam was ready to receive his visiter; and Banana, who always walked into the room with his watch in his hand, in order to certify unto others his regard of himself, at half-past nine exactly made a distant and reserved bow to the young lieutenant. The conversation, which, like all English conversations, is generally begun by the weather, was interrupted by the entrance of Jane, who apologized for her negligence in being one minute behind her time.

"Yes," said Banana, "I for one receive your apology, and beg to express my thanks to Mr. Mizen, for, had he not been here, we might have waited half an hour."

Jane blushed. The remark brought the blood to her face in a moment, and placed her in that most awkward of all situations, namely, having to lie against a recorded truth. However, women are seldom quite off their guard, and Jane

admitted the truth of the remark, but hinted her anxiety concerning her brother as the reason.

"Well shuffled out of," said Banana; and, turning to Mizen, he began the conversation. "I suppose, like all sailors, you like your profession?"

"You guess rightly, sir," replied Mizen. "Sailors are more attached to the service of their choice than any other men, and the reason is the constant variety it affords. Can any one imagine a life more horribly monotonous than that of a regiment stationed in a country-town?"

"Why, that is bad enough," said Ganjam; "but what do you think of a line-of-battle ship kept under the admiral's lee, to tack and wear at stated hours—to stand off-and-on shore—to see the same headland—to be exposed night and day—to have no variation but that of the weather and the compass, and to be regularly informed of the captures made by other ships while the fleet are employed in blockading the enemy, who very wisely, and for fear of having to change their harbour or their house, remain quietly at anchor, or only come out to exercise when their foes are sufficiently distant to enable them so to do with a certainty of a return to port?"

"Good morning, Mr. Mizen," said Mrs. Ganjam, as she entered the room, at which moment her husband applied his hand to the bell-rope.

Roberts soon after entered with a hissing urn, and in due time the party were seated.

"I hope you found," said Miss Ganjam, "a sufficient supply of men for your ship last night?"

"Indeed we have been fortunate, I find," replied Mizen; "and so unfortunate, I may say," glancing a slight fire of the eyes in the direction of the daughter; "for now I shall be obliged to return to the Saturn almost immediately."

"And when do you expect to sail again?" continued Jane.

"When the refit of the ship is completed, I imagine we shall start upon another cruise. We do not eat the bread of idleness, I assure you; and we earn, and earn hardly, our scanty pay."

"Scanty enough," replied Banana. "There is hardly a clerk in a banking-house, who dangles his feet from a high

stool, that does not receive more for doing less; besides which his nights are his own, and he sleeps in comfort."

"That is true," said Mizen; "but we have always the hope of reward, and we have likewise ambition to spur us on. A man who rises by his own merit in our service must always have a glorious retrospect in old age."

"And plenty of rheumatism for a reward," said Banana.

At this moment Roberts entered with a letter, which was given to Ganjam.

"Thank God!" said Banana, "that's not to me. I cannot find out what people can have to say to each other, that they keep scribbling and scribbling day after day."

"Is it from Robert?" said Mrs. Ganjam.

"No, my dear," replied her husband; "this is from Dorchester."

"How very remiss of him not to write!" said Jane. "He must have known how anxious we should all be to hear how he passed his time, and how he liked his change of life."

"I suppose," said Mizen, "the young gentleman is in the country amusing himself."

"I am sure I hope so," replied his mother; "but I thought such recreations were not allowed. When a boy once enters your service, I thought it difficult to obtain leave of absence for any time."

"Yes," replied Mizen, "Captain Ruffle is not very fond of granting any recreation; but your son has been beforehand with him there, and taken French leave."

At this moment, when the dreadful calamity was about to be announced from the question which must have followed, Banana, in one of his nervous moments, in preparing to place an egg in the egg-cup, convulsively and unintentionally closed his hand. The shell broke, and the soft boiled food dripped through his fingers on the table-cloth.

"Oh! good heaven!" he cried, "what have I done! I declare I only took the egg up in this manner," said he, taking up another, "and it broke in my hand. I really am very sorry, Mrs. Ganjam. Good God! and such an exhibition, too! I will ring the bell. This is very unlucky, very unfortunate indeed."

Banana's nervous exhibition excited no little merriment. He continued with unceasing rapidity to apologize for his

misfortune, for he never would allow it to be carelessness, and kept up such a running fire of words, that nothing short of exhaustion brought his tirade to a comma. At last, for there must be an end even to excuses, his tongue stopped, and left a vacancy for any other remark. This was eagerly seized by Mrs. Ganjam, who asked Mr. Mizen what he meant by taking French leave.

This was easily explained, but not to the satisfaction of the ladies. They were very apprehensive that Robert had been guilty of some breach of discipline, and would have commented seriously on his want of prudence, had not the lieutenant begun to address Mr. Ganjam.

"I believe, sir, I mentioned to you that, owing to the number of men we had been fortunate enough to crimp, my stay in town must be very short."

Ganjam nodded assent.

"Captain Ruffle," he continued, "is very anxious to get to sea; every exertion is used to refit the ship; and I fear, from the conversation which has passed, that we shall sail without your son. For if, as Miss Ganjam informs me, he is in the country amusing himself, I fear he will not be able to join us in time, more especially as I know Captain Ruffle intends to sail the instant I return."

"This will be very unfortunate," replied Mr. Ganjam; "but, as Captain Ruffle has given leave of absence, I conclude he has likewise given him instructions when to join."

"Indeed," replied Mizen, "I thought Captain Ruffle desired him to join immediately; for the principal object of my visit was, in compliance with the captain's request, to volunteer my services in taking charge of him; and I really do not see how I can remain in town one hour later than tomorrow morning."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Ganjam, "we shall be very grateful for any kindness you may bestow upon my son. I hope he will behave himself in such a manner as to secure your friendship and support."

"Madam," said Mizen, "I pledge myself to do all that I can do for him. If, therefore, you can send to him to come to town directly, I will take his place in the coach for tomorrow, and will call here at an early hour to accompany him."

"Send for him!" said Banana. "Why, where the devil

is he, Mr. Mizen? Is he not on board the Saturn, or is he cruising about the country?"

"Really," replied the lieutenant, somewhat surprised at the hasty question, "really, Mr. Banana, I am quite ignorant of his situation; but this I know, that Captain Ruffle has had some trouble to keep him on the ship's books; and if he does not join before the next muster he must be erased from the list. For this reason I was particularly anxious to see him safe on board."

"How very unfortunate!" replied Mrs. Ganjam. "What can be done?"

"Why, madam," said the lieutenant, "if your son is in the country, so far distant as not to be in town by to-morrow, you had better write to his friends with whom he is staying, to send him across the country immediately; but if he is within hail of London, you had better despatch some one to bring him to town to-night, and, as I said before, I will take charge of him."

"Mr. Mizen," said Mr. Ganjam, in a slow, measured tone, "will you answer me one or two questions? for here is some mystery I should like to have explained."

"Most certainly," replied the young lieutenant.

"Pray, sir," said Ganjam, "when did you leave the Saturn?"

"The day before yesterday," was the reply.

"Was my son then on board the ship, or was he on shore on leave from Captain Ruffle?"

"Gad!" grumbled Banana, "just like an attorney—questions and answers."

"He was not on board the Saturn," answered Mizen, "but was on shore, as you say, on leave from Captain Ruffle."

"Then he left the Saturn previously to your coming to town!"

"Left the Saturn!" replied Mizen, with a smile; "why he never joined that I heard of; we have got his chest, but for the owner—"

"Good heavens!" interrupted Mrs. Ganjam, "what do I hear!"

"Stop, stop, my dear," said her husband. "Mr. Mizen, answer me this question:—

"Was my son on board the Saturn during the last cruise?"

"Most certainly not," replied the lieutenant; "we sailed quite suddenly, and Captain Ruffle said he had not time to join."

"Well, so I expected," said Ganjam; "but since you anchored this time, has he not been on board?"

"Most certainly not, sir," was the answer. "When we anchored, a man from the coach-office brought his chest on board; but, in answer to the captain's questions relative to your son, declared that he had not come down with his chest. This satisfied Ruffle that your son was detained by you in London, and I assure you we have never seen or heard of him."

"Oh, my son, my son!" cried Mrs. Ganjam, "my own, my dearest son! Where is he? what can have become of him? what shall we do to recover him?" And here all the feelings of the mother broke through the restraints of society. She sobbed bitterly, and, before any further questions could be asked, it was requisite to remove her to another room. She had become dreadfully hysterical, and Jane's feelings were only suppressed for the moment by the dread of some serious illness happening to her parent. Banana paced the room like a panther in a cage, taking short turns, and looking at the herald of ill news as if he could have devoured him. Mizen rose quickly from the table, and was so bewildered at the scene and the mystery he had unravelled, that he stood stock-still, with his eyes fixed upon the retreating figures of the females; while Ganjam, who alone retained his coolness, rang the bell, and stood with his arms folded, quietly awaiting the servant. Roberts very shortly entered; but in a confusion of face and cowardly tremble of his white lips that betrayed his guilt and the knowledge of its discovery. He advanced towards the table as if to remove the urn, but Ganjam interrupted the intention. "Roberts," said Ganjam, in a very impressive manner, "you said that you saw Master Robert *in* the coach: now, on your oath, is that true?"

Roberts faltered, but admitted that he left the coach-office before the departure of the vehicle.

"Then," resumed Ganjam, "the story of the lady under

whose charge you placed him, the sick infant, the back to the horses, and the change of places, is all false?"

Roberts looked like a convicted liar, as he was, and hung down his guilty head.

"And the finger which was hurt by the sudden closing of the door," continued Ganjam, "all false too; not one word of truth from beginning to end; not a syllable of truth even to found expectation upon. Out of my sight, you dishonest, false, faithless servant, and let me never fix my eyes on that face again; for the remembrance of the liar is now so strong that memory will never erase it. Henceforth when I see a man of your height, with a broad, unmeaning face, eyes far apart, with thick lips, and a crying, cringing countenance, then shall I know him to be a man unworthy of credit, and as great a scoundrel as the vicinity of Pall-Mall could produce."

"You infernal vagabond," said Banana, whose turns in the room became shorter and shorter, "the law shall never protect you or any such liar;" and so saying, he assisted the butler out of the room by a propelling motion of the foot, applied to the western settlements of the lying varlet. Away went the servant at an accelerated pace, mumbling something about assault and lawyer, which only increased Banana's rage, and his disposition to have all the satisfaction in his power for his money.

In the mean time, Mizen, who was a good-hearted, gallant fellow, entered into the feelings of the family: he volunteered to rummage London for the youngster; to send an express to Ruffle: he proposed about forty different schemes, all of which were useless, excepting the one of making every inquiry at the coach-office. Mrs. Ganjam was soon seriously indisposed: Jane waited upon her with the attendance of affection and duty. Banana ordered a hackney-coach—a vehicle he abhorred as much as a hearse, and, dead or alive, he never sighed to be placed in either one or the other.

The parting of Mizen was merely the hasty retreat of a bad actor: he bowed, hesitated, assured; in short, like the outline of a dinner oration, "he should have great pleasure in being in any degree serviceable, and the instant his efforts were crowned with success, that instant he should be proud to present himself to the family."

But who can paint the sufferings of a mother when her

child is lost? the hope of recovery rests upon the uncertainty of existence. Who can picture the thrilling feeling of anxiety which every noise is liable to create? or who can imagine the momentary pleasure when hope is nearly realized, and before the cup of expectation is dashed from the lip of affection? This fatal day left a blot upon the heart: the family, once so cheerful, fell into despondency; and days which passed slowly and sadly were succeeded by years of affliction and sorrow.

CHAPTER VII.

——"But, if there is an hereafter,—
And that there is, Nature uninfluenced,
And suffer'd to speak out, tells every man,—
Then must it be an awful thing to die!"

The Grave.

Two days had elapsed, and no stranger was visible. Captain Smith resolved to return to the nearest port on the coast of Africa, in order to take in a fresh supply of water; for, in the eagerness to lighten the Rapid in order to effect her escape, they had started so much that it was deemed unsafe to continue the voyage to the West Indies. As usual with unfortunate men, every thing appeared to set directly against us; the wind, which, like fortune, is generally variable, seemed at present, like adversity, always to set with a strong tide against its victims, until, to aggravate the misfortune, it died into a calm. The reduction of the allowance of water was one of our many miseries, so little known to the affluent, who loll on the silken couches of luxury, and who feel the want of pleasure as a real misfortune. Oh, none can tell but those who have experienced it, the dreadful annoyance of a mouth eternally parched with heat, the constant want of a fluid little relished when easily procured, the pangs, the fevered excitement of thirst! The portion hoarded with care was served out with niggard precaution; the calm waters reflected the heat of the tropical sun, and a haze, arising from the excessive heat, seemed to spread itself

over the ocean! Day after day we watched with anxious look the occasional cat's-paw of wind which ruffled the water at different distances, and hailed them as the forerunner of the breeze which was to bear us to our port, and restore us to our comforts; the clouds, which sometimes rose from the horizon, were watched with rapture, and as often as they dissipated into nothingness, even the stoutest heart seemed to feel the disappointment, and the merriest to sink into despair.

The slaves were the first to feel the sad effects of the reduction of allowance; some sickened immediately, and wasted gradually away. The heat of the hold was oppressive beyond imagination, and the nauseous effluvia arising from such a congregated mass of negroes by no means tended to render the ship more agreeable. It was unsafe to allow them the trifling recreation of liberty; they were suffering from want of water, and the half-madness it occasioned made it doubly necessary to keep them in the securest confinement. The spirit of insubordination soon manifested itself among the ship's company, and nothing but the determined conduct of Captain Smith and his bloodhound, the mate, could have controlled the half-mutinous crew.

It was on the third day after the calm had established itself, and the idle sail had hung without motion from the yard, when the long-expected calamity in the shape of death first occurred. A young negro who, when shipped, had been suffering from the wounds occasioned by the rust of the shackle, and who was of a violent and uncontrollable disposition, had hastened the end of his miserable existence by his fretful temper and excited manner. I shall never forget my first feeling when the poor emaciated slave was brought on-deck in order to try the effect of what little air the heavens allowed us. He was then nearly totally exhausted, and even the unmerciful and tyrannous conduct of the mate, in order to excite the poor sufferer to some exertion in his own behalf, perfectly failed; he was stretched upon the deck under the awning, his eyes already fixed, but with a beam of joy lighting up his sickened countenance which riveted me to the fatal scene. Oh! that smile which grew over his face as the poor wretch felt the application of a wet sponge upon his lips—the heaven of his expectation!

the eye for a moment blazed with life, and even this poor, miserable, degraded victim appeared to cling to existence, as if hope had pictured some futurity of greater comfort beyond his present sufferings. He lingered on, apparently without any particular pain, until the hoarse gurgling of his breath, as it rattled in his throat, announced as near at hand his delivery from the thraldom of this world's tyrants.

The crew had assembled abaft the mainmast, and in silence watched the termination of their victim's life. The features were gradually sharpening, and even the nose, which death could scarcely alter in a negro, assumed a different shape; the bright black of the complexion gave way to a dark sodden blue, while the lips were livid, and the eyes sickening into inanimation. At last they fixed, and fixed their glassy balls upon the captain's face; the expression of exertion died into a calm and tranquil repose, and without a convulsive start, as if the body were struck by death, the slave was freed from his master, and his life of misery was terminated.

There seemed an awful feeling of respect for the dead. Captain Smith's eyes were riveted on the negro's; he remained for some moments more like a statue than a man, when suddenly some tears broke through their barriers, and he turned away his head, and walked aft. The mate had no feeling even when the negro lived, and his hatred for the race was manifested directly the poor wretch was dead. "Here," said he, addressing the crew, "take hold of this black beast and bundle him overboard; we shall have enough to do with these stinking devils yet before we get safe back again."

I shrank away from this inhuman villain, and was sneaking towards the cabin, when he called me by name, and desired me in his usual coarse manner to "handle a leg, and learn to be serviceable to my friends." I could not escape, for the captain's son, who was smiling at my fear, freshened my way, as he called it, towards the corpse. Until this moment I was unacquainted with death; it was the first dead man I had ever seen, and I shrank from the negro with an unutterable horror. In vain I cried to be excused; this only made the desire of tyranny the stronger. Young Smith took me by the arm, and leading me towards the corpse, threw me over the body. I fell nearly as dead

as the negro, and shuddered into a perfect deprivation of strength; the very touch of the corpse had nearly deprived me of reason, and at that moment I could have kissed the hand which would in reality have finished my existence.

"Halloo!" said the mate, "here's a pretty fuss about a live gentleman and a dead nigger! we must make the youngster better acquainted with his companions. Why, what the devil is he afraid of? does he think the black will eat him? Here, Jones," said he, addressing one of the sailors, "hand me a rope-yarn or two while I lash them together until he endeavours to bury the negro."

This warning roused me from my situation; I resolved to exert all my power in preference to being lashed to the dead body, and therefore taking the hand of the enfranchised slave, I vainly endeavoured to move the body in the direction indicated.

"It's like an ant at a black beetle," said young Smith; "we must lend him a hand:" and without the slightest expression of fear he seized the other hand, the mate and Jones taking each a leg, and in this manner we dragged the negro to the starboard gangway: here we rested him.

I thought that some prayer for the dead was about to be offered up, for the crew had assembled by the mainmast and on the booms, and those who wore their hats unconsciously uncovered their heads.

"Come, bear a hand," said the captain, "and bury the poor fellow."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the mate; "come, you Ganjam, lend a hand at the launch, and get accustomed to cutting away the dog-shores."

Again I applied my little power,—less perhaps from the unwillingness of the act, and the fear occasioned by touching a dead man: we edged his head over the side, when the mate, lifting the legs up, overtoppled the balance, and calling out, "Launch oh!" propelled the body over the gangway; the corpse, touching against the side, fell with a dismal splash into the sea, and the waters rolled over the dead.

No kind expression followed the act. No "God bless him!" fell from the lips of the bystanders. No "Amen!" awfully closed the scene. The circles of the water had lost themselves in the greatness of the ocean, and no ruffle remained to indicate the last reposing spot of the negro;

but all was calm and hushed around: no welcome breeze blew to move us from the spot, and the ship with her taunt mast and shining sides, might by fancy be created into the monument of the dead. Well I remember lingering over the gangway and believing I still could see the corpse at a great distance below the surface—stationary—neither rising to the surface nor sinking to the unfathomed depths of the great deep.

It was but the commencement of a new career in life; from this moment I became acquainted with death, and I soon lost my respect for it, or my apprehension when I saw it. Day after day we lost a slave; the calm still remained—

"And ocean slumber'd like an unwean'd child."

At last one of the crew, who had become delirious from drinking salt-water, died, and preparations were making to dispose of the body with all possible speed, for the men all seemed aware that the same chance might befall them, and they liked not the warning always visible. No thief gazes with rapture on a gallows; and no heartless tyrant or shivering coward admires the view of death, for *that* he knows must overcome him; and all his vauntings and fears, he feels, are useless against the power of that which leads captivity captive!

I thought I perceived some emotion of fear, as two or three of the men, who could handle a palm and needle, set to work to sew the corpse in canvass, and to affix a couple of shot to his feet. The workmen proceeded in silence, and stitched as quickly as possible, being evidently very much disgusted with their occupation. The task performed, the corpse was put upon a grating, and the ensign of the Rapid was placed over it; the captain desired that the bell might be tolled, and to my very great astonishment he produced a Prayer Book. I never thought we had so much salvation on board; for several Sundays had passed, and certainly I never had perceived much religious feeling either in word or deed, on board that hated vessel.

The body was placed upon the same gangway from which we had launched the negro, but very different was the respect paid to the white man. A rope's-end from a small coil was fastened to the grating, the bell was stilled, and Captain

Smith, with a most sanctified air read the service: the crew appeared not only attentive but moved by the ceremony, and some, in compliment to their departed friend, had dressed themselves in their best clothes. The captain stopped and nodded to the mate, the flag was withdrawn, and the grating and the corpse fell into the water. It was as dead a calm as ever seaman knew; the sea was like a polished mirror, not a cloud darkened the smallest spot, the sails were motionless, and an ensign which had been hoisted previously to the funeral hung like a rope from the peak—it was a sad and dismal sight.

The little stock of water got gradually less, and day after day a greater reduction took place in the allowance. The crew spent their time in gazing upon the horizon: they took their food not at regular times, as was customary; all the friendship, all the good fellowship between them seemed fast dissolving, and now that Death had claimed his first victim, the long-suppressed silence was broken, and mutiny and discord began to reign.

At first the storm only manifested itself in trifling discontent; the men, as they formed themselves in groups, talked loudly of their sufferings from the privation of water; then at the little they received for the dangers they braved; then at the calm being a judgment of God upon them for having assisted the captain in his half-murderous intention when the poor slaves were headed in the casks and turned adrift; then they anticipated the horrors of a further reduction, the increased deaths among themselves, and then they spoke right out of open mutiny, of seizing the ship, of murder, of breaking open the fore-hold and of drinking one good draught even if they died of thirst a day after.

"How many miles," said one, "do you fancy we are from that hell-hole where we got these devils from?"

"Two hundred, if we are an inch," was the reply.

"We could not pull that distance in the boats, do you think we could, Jim?"

"It would be hard and dry work."

"How much water do you think there is on board?"

"Only two tuns at the most; and if this cursed calm still continues, what are we to do?"

"Why, murder the slaves to be sure, and seize the ship;

we can live long enough then on the water, and I suppose there must be a breeze here once a twelvemonth at least."

"Yes, but," said another, "if we wait inactive until the water is all gone, we shall share the same fate as the slaves; it will then be too late to put our plans in force; we must begin directly, or we must die."

This conversation took place on the larboard side of the forecastle, close to the end of the booms; and I, as if destined always to be a bird of ill-omen, had been stretched out under the bows of the long-boat, endeavouring to get to sleep, but the thoughts of our situation had at first hindered that very effectually, and the alarming crisis now brought so near at hand, kept me on the broad watchfulness of despair.

"I tell you," said the last man, "we had better begin to-night; if we can get rid of the captain and the mate, we can then make short work of it, but without that we shall never succeed, for the captain still clings to the idea of money by his black cargo, and he never will consent to part with the chance of his profit until we are starved in waiting."

"Blow me," said the first man, "if I don't think Jim was an attorney."

This produced a kind of feverish laugh, which was soon over; for, although the joke were ever so good, they were in no laughing mood to enjoy it.

"Why, I do know something about the law of self-preservation, and I have seen better days than these; but it is no time for joking now. What say you to my proposition to *seize* the captain and the mate, bundle the blacks overboard, and then wait for a breeze?"

"It will be a rough murder," said the man who enacted carpenter, and who seemed more disposed to try some more moderate remedy, which was to wait another day, and then, as he said, "to saw wood upon the whole of them."

"Yes, but, Master Chips," said the attorney, "two tun of water among two hundred and sixty souls is not much, even at a quarter of a pint a day, and he must be a woodcock indeed to live on that."

"Why, do those birds never drink?" asked the first man.

"No one ever saw the like of it," was the reply; "they live entirely upon suction, but take so little that a thimble-full would serve one a year."

"Well then," said Chips, "I wish I was a woodcock."

"But," returned the attorney, "we must not go to work blindfolded. How many of us are agreed to this manner of proceedings? why, we are but eight here in all, so there are sixteen against us, without counting the captain, his son, the mate, and that shrivelled herring, young Bob. Then, when we have done for the slaves, those two boys, and one or two of our own, who won't like this death without benefit of clergy, we shall have enough to last out a fortnight longer, or we might take to the pinnace and rig an awning over her."

"She is as leaky as a sieve," said the carpenter; "they have never kept any water in her, and the sun has nearly split the planks; she would not be seaworthy for at least a couple of days."

"Well, Jim! now let us hear you make it quite clear that we have a right to commit this murder; and if you can do that, you are the best of sea-lawyers."

The sea-attorney's argument merely went to this:—"that self-preservation was the first law of nature;" and it was evident that law could only be observed by the desperate act already proposed.

"I'm blessed if he is not a real sea-solicitor," replied the carpenter; "but how are we to manage this business?"

"Oh, easy enough!" replied Jim; "the captain always goes to bed at nine o'clock, and at twelve, when the mate is called, we can put both to rest, *for dead men tell no tales.*"

"I'm not for that," said one, "I am only for seizing them; for if so be we gags the captain and mate, we might find the navigation rather difficult."

"Let's get them first," said Jim, "and the rest will be easily done."

At this moment another of the crew, who had been sitting on the starboard side, under the shade of the foremast, came round, and the conversation dropped, Jim merely remarking, "that he had no objection to call the watch at the time proposed;" the hint was taken, and the carpenter was appointed to handle the commander,* as he was much in the habit of managing that at all times.

No sooner had the mutineers decamped, than I stole aft on the quarter-deck near the companion; and having heard my

* A commander is a kind of mallet.

own doom pronounced, I fell into a state of dejection, which terminated in a flood of tears.

Poverty, it is said, makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows, and misery oftentimes makes a friend; accustomed, as I was, to the scorn of one and the rebuke of another, I hardly hoped to find a man to compassionate my misfortunes. I was withering fast away, and yet I bore up better against the deprivation than others whose strength was greater and whose frame was more robust. I was sitting on a coil of rope abreast of the companion, my eyes suffused with tears, unable to reconcile any particular course to my mind, when the captain came on deck. I never saw him so dejected; he walked aft and looked at the calm horizon, then gazed at the sky, as if vainly persuading himself that he saw some light scud aloft; he turned from the bright and unpromising scene, and looked towards the gangway, where some of the men were handing overboard another negro; his eye rested upon the dead for a moment, when he perceived me, and advanced towards the coil on which I was sitting. I expected my usual salutation, but, to my great astonishment, he addressed me in a mild and consoling strain.

"I have been to blame, youngster," said he, "in bringing you into this distressing situation, and I fear you are not strong enough to bear up much longer against the greater deprivation which must ensue; but keep up your courage as long as you can, and we may yet live to have a greater allowance to-morrow."

"To-morrow, sir," I replied, "we shall not want it, unless something is done immediately."

"Poor fellow," he said, as he turned away, "he is quite incoherent."

A quarter-deck walk is never very long, so in two moments more the captain was close to me again.

"Come, youngster," he said, "go below and lie down; don't sit here in the sun, it will make you worse."

I replied, "it did not signify;" but looking imploringly in his face, I said, in a low tone of voice, "Oh, sir, I have such a secret to tell you before I die, but I am afraid of being overheard."

"Poor little fellow," said he, "come below and I'll give you a small drop of water, which I can spare, and let me see if that will cheer you up."

It is but justice to Smith to say, that he did not take one drop more than the smallest boy in the ship; he controlled his thirst better, from the evenness of his temper, and his not giving way to despondency; he tried every morning the plan of drinking by absorption, and recommended the crew to follow his example, and bathe. Latterly, however, some sharks were always hovering about the ship, apparently awaiting the arrival of a negro; and death, however horrible even by prolonged misery, can picture nothing so truly terrible as being the prey to those ravenous creatures, at the name of which the bravest man in the water would shudder with dismay. The captain therefore drew the water himself, and holding the bucket over his head, reversed it, and enjoyed a shower-bath.

"Come, youngster," said he, as he stepped upon the companion ladder, "I'll give you all I can spare."

The captain now began to entice me by soothing words, and I, hardly knowing what I did, followed him to his cabin; his son was lying full length on the locker, his lips being much swollen, and apparently with a difficulty of respiration. The captain took from his scanty store about half a wine-glass of water, and was on the point of giving it to me, when his son jumped like a maniac from his reclining position, and rushed to thwart the kind intentions of his father.

"Oh, father! father!" he said, "only give me one drop to wash my lips, for they burn—they burn!"

The glass was in my hands while the frantic boy was kept at arm's-length by the captain. Although nearly exhausted with thirst, I mustered courage only to take a small half, and then gave the glass to the greatest tyrant that ever held dominion over me—I mean the captain's son. The captain was evidently much struck by the forgiveness of injuries thus expressed, and as his son hastily gulped down the water, he tapped me on the head and whispered, "well done, my lad."

"Will you hear my secret now, sir?" I said, "for to-morrow it will be be useless."

"Begin, youngster," said he, "but you had better sleep and not talk, for the less you speak the more you will escape the thirst."

I beckoned to his son, and said, "Not before him; I would not say a word before any one but yourself; we must be quite alone."

"Poor little fellow," said the captain, "another time will do as well;" and he turned towards the companion to go on deck again. I caught him by the hand and said, I suppose with some energy, "As you value your life and ours, sir, listen to me only for two minutes, and alone."

It was almost in vain I solicited; but at last, as if more to comply with the half-frantic wish of a dying boy than in the belief that I had any thing serious to disclose, he persuaded his son to lie down on deck in the shade, and I began my intelligence with a very short preface. "I am not," I said, "quite so nearly gone as you think, but neither you nor I will outlive this night if you do not believe what I am about to tell you." I then told him every word I had overheard, when the conversation took place, and where I was concealed.

At first, the captain attributed the whole secret to the first signs of insanity, at which stage the sufferer almost invariably believes that a conspiracy has taken place against him, and that his best friend is his worst enemy. This bore strictly on my case; for the very man I pointed out as the ringleader was the man who had been the kindest to me: it was self-preservation which made me guilty of ingratitude; and a hope of altogether stopping the cruel murder, that prompted me to break the silence I had at first imposed upon myself. The captain cross-examined me for more than a quarter of an hour, having, during the questions, led me away from the subject, and actually enticed me to speak of my father; but when he returned to the point I never varied the least. Convinced at last that I was perfectly sane, he called the mate, and placing him opposite me, said, "Mate, this youngster has detected the most diabolical plan formed by that villanous sea-attorney, James Waters; why, they propose to murder both of us to-night, to throw all the slaves overboard, and then, if possible, to fit the pinnace for the journey, get into her, and push off for the coast." The mate's face expressed incredulity, and in a rough manner, but checked occasionally by the captain, he began an examination. I never varied the least. I told him who had engaged to murder him, and who had volunteered to enact the same execution on the captain.

"Well, youngster," said the captain, "can you keep the secret?"

"So well," I replied, "that I had resolved to keep it altogether, had not your kindness of manner determined me, if possible, to save your life."

"Then go on deck and be silent," said the captain.

"No, no!" said the mate, "this is no time to leave any thing to chance: why, by his account, I have only six hours to live; we had better at once counteract their plan."

"And how is it to be done? the youngster said that eight *had agreed*, and long before this time many more must have joined."

"Suppose," said the mate, "we were to get them aloft to take a reef in, and then seize them; the arms are all here, loaded and ready."

The captain shook his head; "Taking a reef in looks very suspicious in a calm; and besides, the very men we arm may have consented to join them; that bait will never succeed."

"Suppose we release," said the mate, "some of the slaves, and arm them?"

"Worse and worse," replied the captain; "those poor devils are almost dead from exhaustion, and if released, are as likely to turn upon us as upon them. I see nothing left for it but one thing, which is to guide the storm we cannot control. Suppose we get all hands on the quarter-deck, mention to them the quantity of water remaining on board, our distance from the land, and the necessity of something being done, and done directly. Have you served out the allowance of water yet?"

"No, sir," replied the mate; "it is now the time, and they will be mad under any delay."

"Then serve it directly," said the captain, "and when that is done, they will be in a more quiet mood to hear reason: but I will speak to you again afterward. My little lad," said he to me, "remain here below, I will bring you your allowance: and, mate," he continued, "don't begin to serve the water out until I come."

The mate went on deck, and gave directions for the seamen to receive their allowance, which was a gill each, one gill having been served at noon. The men attended with a dogged silence; they seemed to take the scanty drop as if resolved very shortly to have more: they murmured not, as usual: some, when the water was given them, drank it off at one swallow, and looked with a leering eye at their com-

panions; and these men the quick eye of the captain recognised as those mentioned by me: some sipped a drop or two, and carried the rest away with the utmost caution; and two staid, and begged and implored to have the smallest portion more. Each man retired with his allowance or his empty cup. The captain beckoned the mate to follow him, and he said, "Besides Ganjam's eight, three more have joined; we have only one course to pursue, which is, to sacrifice the slaves."

"That's no great sin," said the mate; "a hundred or two black fellows never will be missed, and we must manage to get some more on board after we have got into port."

"I cannot think of any other plan," resumed the captain: "the case is very desperate. You see the men have grown quite indifferent to the women, and they look on Death as a neighbour much too close to be pleasant. You'll stand by me to the last?" said the captain, fixing his eagle eyes upon the mate, as if to look into his very soul; "we might as well be killed on deck as murdered in our beds!"

The mate replied in a firm voice, "Never fear me, I'll stand by you to the last."

"Then," said the captain, "let's keep Ganjam in the cabin ready to hand up the pistols, and get the men on deck as quickly as possible." When the summons for all hands to go aft was repeated round the deck, it was easy to see that not a moment was to be lost in making the communication proposed. Eleven men stood close together, Waters being rather in advance of them, while the rest straggled one from the other; the captain placed himself just before the companion, his son being seated close to him, while the mate was about a pace in the rear towards me. I put my head up to listen, having in each hand a pistol, which I kept out of sight. Captain Smith was a regular sailors' orator; he knew exactly how to lead them by words, and he addressed himself to the mutineers with the air of a friend. "I hope, my lads," he began, "that ever since we sailed together, you have found me bear all your misfortunes in the same proportion as yourselves, and that I never asked one of you to do what I was afraid to do myself. We have got into a devil of a scrape now, and I want your assistance to get us out of it. You are aware that we have not much water on board; in short, it is of no use to blind you to

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your situation, each succeeding day sees us in a worse condition than the day which is past, and if this calm were to continue two days longer, I need not tell you what must be the consequence. We are twenty-four in number belonging to the vessel, besides the slaves; our water is very nearly run out; and although only two hundred miles from the land, yet we are in a state of absolute ruin; for a fortnight we have remained as stationary as if we were at anchor, and if the calm remains, we have only the hope that by great exertion we may reach the land. We have still water enough for ourselves for at least ten days more, but we have on board nearly upwards of two hundred human beings, and if they share with us all that remains, we have not enough for three days, with the utmost possible care, and a further reduction of allowance. Now, my lads, as this is a case where it is evident we must either sacrifice the slaves, or take to the boat and leave them to chance succour, I do not feel disposed to bear the blame myself of such a destruction. I should like each of you to give me your opinion, and I pledge myself to act with the majority. I have seen your depression of spirits, and have only wondered how you have borne up so well against the miseries which have surrounded you; but you are English sailors, and I never yet saw the real Old English tar that did not hold up the better the more the storm of adversity assailed him. Now, do you speak out like men; make up your minds to the course you intend me to follow, and you know enough of John Smith to be satisfied that he will not strike his colours, although the difficulties and dangers were fifty times greater than they are at this moment. I give you half an hour to talk over this subject, in the discussion of which neither the mate nor myself will take the smallest part; be quick, therefore, and make up your minds."

CHAPTER VIII.

Treason and murder ever kept together,
As two yoke-devils sworn to either's purpose,
Working so grossly in a natural cause
That admiration did not whoop at them.

Henry V.

The captain and the mate walked aft towards the taffrail, and were in deep conversation; the men all seemed to flock round Waters, who now appeared the leader of the crew, and some minutes elapsed before any opinion was suggested. As for the captain, he had made up his mind not to be innocently butchered; the mate looked on the whole business with the eye of the most careless indifference. I heard him say, "As for negroes, who cares a curse about them but the devil? and we can oblige him by sending more than he wants all at once. I think they would all be dead by the day after to-morrow if we went on as we are now going." Captain Smith was silent, and looked very resolute, but very desponding.

"Now," said Waters, "my lads, now is the time to speak out like men, and not to be starved like rats. It's evident something must be done, and we have the choice of three evils: either all hands to perish together; or to bundle the blacks overboard, which I don't think, on this occasion, could be called murder; or to take to the boat, with lots of water, and pull to the shore."

"That last is no use at all, Waters," said one; "for if we are to leave the blacks without any water, they must perish: so that I think, if we decide to destroy them either one way or the other, either by giving them more water than they want or giving them none at all, it amounts to one and the same thing."

"I'm for beginning, and putting them out of their sufferings," said Waters; "I dare say, by the row they are kicking up, two or three more are ready for the sharks; and by the Lord, some of you had better look out, or you'll be making

a mess for those large-jawed gentlemen. Come, who's going to speak first?"

"I am," replied one of the crew. "Suppose, instead of butchering all the slaves, we were to get rid of all those who are so ill as to be past the hope of recovery, and allow the others to have another day's chance: you see, if they are to die, one day can make no difference."

"That is a good proposition," replied two or three together.

"But who is to be doctor, and give his opinion as to the case?" said Waters: "I think we had better appoint the one who made the proposition."

This was unanimously agreed to: Waters then continued, "Well, let it be so; and if to-morrow we have no luck, why, then we will decide as to the rest." At this moment Smith had advanced near the crew, in order to catch a word or two, when Waters told him that they had agreed among themselves, and mentioned the above plan.

"I think it a very good one," said the captain; "and, therefore, the sooner we begin the better."

The newly appointed doctor descended into the hold, the rest of the crew standing round the combings of the main hatchway to hand up the victims. Eight were handed up dead, stiff, and cold: they must have died the day previous, for a very strong proof of putridity escaped with their presence. Even the stoutest heart seemed to fail: their poor emaciated bodies told the dumb tale of all their sufferings. They were thrown overboard with all the unfeelingness of men whose feelings are blunted by starvation; it was done very speedily, and then a living man was handed on deck. Living he was, and that was all Life's last light was almost shut out for ever; the poor creature seemed a skeleton, and was so weak as to be unable to stand; it was evident his exit was near, without human murderers to aid. The victim seemed to smile languidly, and I verily believe there was not a man on board that did not compassionate his misfortunes: he was placed for the moment on the quarter-deck, and soon had a companion as ill as himself, ready for the living grave.

"Sir! sir!" said I, as the captain came towards me, "save those poor wretches—let them die without our sins being increased, or give them the chance that awaits those

below. They have all of them had their allowance of water for to-night, and none is served out until nine o'clock to-morrow; between this and that hour a breeze may spring up, or it may have pleased God to release some of these half-dead, miserable men, and thus we may escape a portion of the mischief."

"Well said, my little fellow; you have saved more than one to-night; 'tis a very good idea. Here, Waters," said the captain, "what say you to this proposition?—to let these poor fellows die on deck to-night, instead of throwing them overboard; and if we get no wind before the time of serving out the water, why then we must follow up our plan."

"There can be no objection to that," said Waters; "and in order to give as many as possible a chance, we had better bring some more on deck; it will relieve those below: and at any rate, die or no die, they will be more comfortable while they live, if they call breathing living."

"And," resumed the captain, "they cannot create any confusion, poor creatures!"

Night now began to throw its darkness over the waste of waters: the watch, as usual, had been set; the weary had betaken themselves to sleep, and a silence, unusual at so early an hour, hushed our feelings into an awful reverence for our dreadful situation. The most desperate in wickedness quailed under the idea of the wholesale murder about to be committed with the rising sun; and some, whose hearts were not inured to these scenes of wretchedness, strove to remember their almost-forgotten prayers. There she lay, like an ark on the waters, as still as the winds—she was motionless. The decks had been long neglected, the ropes had remained triced up in their coils, the sails hung idly down; the silence was equal to the calm, save that now and then a feeble struggle for breath escaped from the negroes, or the rattle of death sounded its quivering warning in the throat of the dying.

It was such a night, and I stood alone, gazing on all the darkness allowed to be visible. I felt a greater joy at that moment than I had ever experienced. I had saved the life of him who had inflicted the greatest woes on me: it was a proud consideration, and the lurkings of revenge were hushed in the benefits I had bestowed. I felt that, if the worst of deaths came upon me, I had done one good action. Oh!

how my memory revisited the scenes of my childhood: how, in that dark and solemn hour, the thoughts of past pleasures rushed over my mind, and pictured all I had lost, and all I might have enjoyed! Oh! how I recalled all the kindness of my mother; and then how suddenly the scene changed, and murder, for self-preservation, shook over me the black mantle of despair.

I had remained about half an hour lost to all the horrors around me, when the moon suddenly appeared above the horizon; it seemed to cast a wide and tender light to soften down the hoar austerity of present desolation; it rose clear and beautiful, and the stars studded the heavens. I looked around me: the mate, who had charge of the watch, was fast asleep in the netting: not far from him, and close to the very gangway over which we had thrown so many of our shipmates, was Waters; he was disencumbered of his conscience, and slept like an infant: on the larboard side of the quarter-deck were the negroes, ten of them, lying fore and aft the deck, all quiet: no one stood by the wheel—that was left to itself. I walked forward with cautious step, for I feared to break the repose which was around me: even the slaves slept. On the forecastle the watch were dozing, and I made the round of the deck unperceived, as I thought, by all. I returned to the taffrail, and again began to meditate on our present lot and our probable destiny.

I must have remained in my revery for an hour, at which time I was startled by the appearance of something moving on the larboard netting. It was the captain, who was rather too good a judge of human nature to slumber when his men had actually proposed to murder him: he said, in a low voice, "What are you watching, youngster?" I replied, that "a cloud was rising under the moon, but so slowly as to be nearly motionless." He jumped from the netting, and giving me a pistol, which he told me to place below, fixed his eyes upon our only hope. I soon returned by his side: slowly and gradually the horizon became darkened; a large cloud had risen, and was spreading far and wide. We immediately awoke the mate, and told him to get a hand or two aloft to furl the top-gallant sails: the fore-topmast staysail was set, and, as the clouds began to look blacker and blacker, the topsails were reefed, and every thing made ready for a squall. It was surprising to see the animation

with which the crew worked. The watch below, on hearing the mate give orders relative to the sails, were on deck in a minute; every eye was turned towards the quarter from which the wind and the more welcome rain were expected; the sky was overcast, and yet not a drop fell, and not a breeze ruffled the smooth face of the waters. Towards midnight a slight flow of wind appeared on the surface, the yards were braced up on the larboard tack, and very shortly afterward the Rapid began to move, and we again heard the welcome noise of the water breaking under her bows, and saw the white bubbles pass the gangways. A course was instantly shaped for the nearest land; a slight drizzling rain began to fall, and deliverance was at hand. At two A. M. it began to rain hard. The awning was instantly spread, a small hole was cut in it amidships, a shot was suspended so as to form the canvass into a kind of funnel, buckets were placed underneath, and every drop was caught that dripped through the hole. The slaves below, on hearing the water splash on the deck, became clamorous, and strove to break adrift: it was decided to let about twenty on deck at a time. No sooner were they released than they threw themselves on their faces, and licked the cool moisture with the greediness of hounds after a long run; they rolled their fevered bodies over and over, and laughed with horrible insanity. In the mean time the crew were not idle; when the first bucket was filled they drank its contents almost instantaneously: some dipped in a tin pannakin, and hastily applied it to their lips; others lapped it from the bucket, and although it was nauseous in the extreme, from the very strong taste and smell of tar, yet it was devoured with a relish no nectar could have given. I had got a towel which had become saturated with the rain, and cringing abaft on the starboard quarter, gratified my thirst from the stream I strained from that, and afterward from the drops which fell from the boom mainsail, as it bagged to leeward. In a short time, from the quantities that fell, we were all in high spirits, and talked and laughed as if we were in an enviable situation. With the dawn of day the wind rather increased, and the rain, which had fallen in torrents, began to clear away; four of the negroes were dead on deck, and these we committed to the deep without the smallest ceremony.

At noon, by the observation, we were only distant from

the land one hundred and thirty miles, and, at the rate we were running, the next day would have seen us in sight and at anchor; but the course we were steering took us to that part to the northward of Loango where there is no harbour or roadstead, yet it was decided by the captain that we had better get close to the land, in order, if possible, to land and recruit the slaves, as well as to get a supply of water. We had, during the shower that fell, increased our stock enough for two or three days at half-allowance. We carried on a press of canvass, and as the breeze increased, the Rapid was going at the rate of nine and sometimes ten knots, so that at midnight it was judged advisable to shorten sail to the topsails and fore-topmast staysail, and at two A. M. we hove-to with our head off shore. As a precautionary measure, we tried for soundings, when to our great astonishment we found ourselves in seven fathoms water. The moon was up, and no land was visible, but the blue of deep water seemed to have changed to a brown colour; we sounded again, and we shoaled the water to six fathoms, again to a-half five. We then shaped a course exactly parallel to the one we had come in shore upon, but we did not deepen the water until about four o'clock, when the day began to break, then we wore round and stood again towards the land. At six we saw it, about ten miles distant, quite low and sandy, without any marks of vegetation, and apparently without inhabitants. At eight we anchored off a low projecting point, on the very verge of which stood a clump of trees; here it was resolved to dig for water, and accordingly the pinnace was hoisted out, and the other boats got ready for that service. It was also the intention of the captain to land the slaves and purify the vessel before we made another run, for they were so sickly, and the vessel so remarkably dirty, from the inability of the men to work at all during the calm, that I question whether, if a bird had flown over the vessel, it would not have died of the pestilential vapour.

The first operation was easily effected—that of digging a well in the sand: a cask with a number of holes bored in the sides was then sunk, and as the water oozed through the sand, or filtered from the ocean, it created a kind of spring, the water being quite fresh, clear, and good. It has been remarked by the shrewd observer, that wherever a tree grows on a low sandy soil, there, provided you are near the

sea, water perfectly fresh may be procured, if a filtration from the ocean, or, in reality, a spring diffusing itself through the sand, has not been discovered; but the practice of thus procuring water during the American war was very common, especially on St. George's Island in the Potomac. We sank seven wells, and before sunset they were all full. In the mean time a spare topsail and some other sails were landed and spread under the trees; some apologies for tents were made; and before dark, the slaves, with the exception of one or two of the women, were landed, and a small number of armed men were placed as sentinels. This precaution was vain, for, independently of the extreme lassitude of these poor emaciated creatures, we found that they were landed on an island, the in-shore side of which was defended by deep waters: we therefore sounded for a passage, in order to place the Rapid in security, either from the vigilance of the cruisers, or the roll of the sea, should the breeze have shifted and blown from the westward.

We had now been at anchor three days, the vessel had been properly cleaned, and we lost our offensive smells; the water was nearly completed, but the slaves were in so sickly a state that to have embarked them immediately would have been to ensure their destruction: the captain therefore determined, on the following day, early in the morning, before the breeze freshened and the sun was too oppressive, to tow or run the Rapid into the shelter afforded by the island, the channel to which we had sufficiently ascertained.

As the moschetoes had become so excessively troublesome, our crew, with the exception of two or three men, always slept on board; the voracious bloodsuckers, it is true, followed us to our ship, but not so as particularly to annoy us; while the men who slept on shore, if they did sleep, were generally brought on board in a fever the following day, from the unceasing irritation produced by these tiny enemies. We left two of the wells and broke up the others, and on every evening we landed the provisions for the slaves the following day: these precautions were taken in order to keep the people out of the sun, for the crew were by no means free from sickness.

We hove the brig to a short stay-peak before we were sent to our hammocks. The captain and the mate were

regaling themselves with some brandy and water, and had planned an excursion on shore in order to steal, or procure, as they mildly termed it, some fresh provisions. They knew that all along the coast some wretches are to be found, who live either by fishing or on the common fruits of the country, which grow wild and plentifully along that miserably unhealthy shore. The mate kept the first watch, and the captain went to bed about ten o'clock; one man was placed to keep a look-out on the forecastle, and to answer in case the men on shore should hail, for we were so close that a voice could be easily heard in the stillness of the night. About midnight some lightning appeared to the eastward, very vivid and forked, but, as this in sultry countries is as common as the land-breeze, it was not heeded, or at any rate did not attract any particular attention, or excite any apprehension. The captain had left word that he would keep a look-out during the middle watch, and he was standing on the larboard gangway looking over the side in a pensive mood. The mate was close beside him, and was just going to lie down on deck, the heat being unusually oppressive, when on turning round towards the forecastle, he ejaculated, "Holy Father, what darkness!" The captain looked up, and beheld a cloud, as dark as a black pall, just beginning to shade the moon: the cloud rose quickly and spread over the land, indicating a squall of no common power.

The crew were without loss of time summoned upon deck, hands were placed by the other anchor, while some were told to be ready and veer away some more cable; but, as we lay perfectly becalmed, it was useless to attempt that operation until the breeze came. The lightning became doubly strong, and strange noises, like the sudden rush of wind, were heard over our heads, as the whole scene seemed suddenly changed, and from a calm and still night, the twinkling stars and shining moon, darkness was over all; excepting when the quick and brilliant flash illumined the atmosphere, and then left it in tenfold obscurity. The mate suggested the necessity of getting one of the boats to the men on shore, in order that, should the ship be blown from her anchors, they might have the means of procuring food. The slaves were awakened by the brilliant flashes, and they howled a dreadfully monotonous tone, which swept over the

still waters and struck us as a funeral dirge. The precaution was too late when suggested; for scarcely had the captain assented to the necessity, when a flash of lightning burst full upon the ship; the thunder roared over our heads; the winds, uncertain from which quarter to blow, howled around us; the rain fell as if from a water-spout; and the Rapid jerked from one point to the other, snapped her cable, swamped her boats, which were fastened by their painters to the stern, and giving a sudden heel over to starboard drove out to sea.

Then was confusion at its height; no pen can adequately describe the vain attempts to restore order. The fore-top-gallant-mast was blown over the side, snapped short off above the cap; the ropes, which had not been properly belayed, were flying away to leeward; and, O God! the dreadful howl of the wind as it rushed over the reeling vessel, bringing with it immense quantities of sand, and almost blinding us with its strength! The cable was cut, and the painters of the boats gave way; the brig was free, but she lay over on her starboard side with her gunwales under, and an attempt to get her before the wind by means of the fore-topmast staysail was useless: the sail blew to ribands in a second, and the bolt-rope only remained. The sailors cowered under the visitation of Providence; none would venture even in the fore-rigging to fasten some small canvass to the rattlings, in order to veer the ship's head round; they clung under the weather bulwark; even the mate lost his courage, and the captain alone stood upright by the wheel, as if to dare the fury of the elements. Destruction seemed at hand; the vessel was fairly on her beam-ends; the crew were useless from apprehension, and all the courage and commands of the captain were vain. At last came one gust of wind with a rush of rain, the sky was cleared to windward, and a calm followed. From all that was dark and dreary, we turned to a clear sky, a bright moon, and a perfect cessation of wind.

The courage of the seamen returned with the fine weather, and for a moment we were led to believe the mischief over; the clouds swept away to leeward, and all hands were employed to repair damages. We had not drifted off the bank, for we were in nine fathoms. The water was highly phosphorescent; and the sea, considering

the momentary gale, and our vicinity to the shore, began to run high. It was judged useless to anchor, for we could not drift out to sea much during the next four hours; at the expiration of which we intended to beat back to the anchoring-ground, and endeavour to sweep for our lost small bower. The topsails were set, and as a light breeze came from the land, we hauled close on a wind, keeping the Rapid under easy sail.

At two o'clock we were a perfect wreck, and nearly swamped. The men, from the fatigues of the day and the extra night-work, soon dozed into sleep; and one of the old seamen who had charge of the watch had imitated the sleepy example, and was soundly snoring,—when both topsails were split to ribands, the Rapid again on her beam-ends, the main-topmast gone, and the fore-topsail yard carried away in the slings. This second squall had, like the first, sprung up in a moment unperceived; the damage was done before the calamity was expected. The Rapid was reeling like a drunken man. The squall settled into a regular hard gale of wind; the spray flew over the devoted vessel; and when the sun rose, red and fiery, the wind increased, if possible, and blew harder than ever my young imagination could conjecture.

Whatever could be done was done; the Rapid was made as snug as circumstances would permit, and she rode over the sea like a beautiful seabird as she was. We could show no canvass, and had indeed very little to show; the trysail was bent; and at sunset we were just able to show a small reefed sail abaft: the sea had got fearfully high, and the wind, which was strong, came in heavy gusts, accompanied by just enough rain to feed it. A heavy shower at sea generally lays the wind, but a slight drizzle invariably tends to increase it.

It were useless to swell out our misfortunes by description; suffice it to say, that the third day that we had driven like a log on the water the gale broke up; our rigging and sails were got to-rights; by sunset on the fourth day we were under double-reefed tops, working back to the anchorage. We were more than one hundred miles from our slaves; and the captain was fearful that, long before we could return, the worst of horrors would have befallen those poor fellows, who seemed doomed to meet with more serious

calamities from Providence than even man, armed with the tyranny of speculation, could inflict. We had only left them one day's provision, and we had now been absent four; supposing the wind to continue as it did, we certainly could not arrive before the expiration of two more. We carried as much sail as prudence dictated and necessity warranted, and took advantage of every deviation of wind which allowed us to look up better for our anchorage.

It was about midnight that one of the watch, who happened, quite accidentally, to look over the starboard quarter, discovered a strange sail; she looked very small and low, and excited no apprehension. The captain, however, by no means liked the report; as the vessel was in the rays of the moonshine, he discerned, with the assistance of his day-glass, that she was of a felucca rig, standing after us, and, from the press of sail, evidently in chase. I before mentioned that our guns had been thrown overboard with the exception of two; these, however, were regarded as our probable saviours from the grasp of the vessel astern, which was instantly recognised as a Spanish privateer, or pirate; which indeed were synonymous, provided the opportunity was good, and the bait sufficiently tempting. She neared us fast in spite of our additional canvass, and by daylight we expected her to be alongside.

About half-past three, just as the first streak of daylight was visible, she tried her distance by firing a long gun: the shot, whizzing over the Rapid, fell harmless in the water about a quarter of a mile on the larboard bow. It was the first shot I had ever heard, and my heart palpitated with a fear hitherto unknown. I looked round at the captain for encouragement, but his thoughts were far otherwise employed than in catching from me either my feeling or boyish timidity.

"Get everybody aft on the quarter-deck," said he, "and arm each man properly." They came, not with the desponding look of cowards, but with the flash of animation which courage gives: none seemed afraid; but each countenance bespoke a resolution which by degrees imparted itself to me. I felt assured that such men would never allow themselves to be conquered; and when I saw in what a careless manner they handled their cutlasses, and the perfect indifference with which they examined their pistols and

muskets, I was almost ashamed of my cowardice, and held out my hand for arms with some degree of confidence.

The captain smiled as he gave me a cutlass, and only remarked, "that I had more heart than strength."

It was now almost daylight: our crew amounted in all, including the captain and mate, to twenty-three; of these, six were still feeble from sickness, and not one was in full vigour; but still they deemed themselves an overmatch for Spaniards, and I am confident never expected an attack: they concluded that, when the daylight was established, the warlike appearance of the Rapid would scare the pirate from his intentions. The captain, who knew that in the event of an action his chance was desperate, determined to have recourse to the old stratagem of wearing the best countenance, and of facing a danger from which he saw it was impossible to fly: he therefore ordered the men to stick out of each port-hole a breaker, on the head of which he painted a tompion in red; the crew were directed to place the sponges and rammers in such a manner that our adversary should see them; and when daylight dawned we tacked and stood towards the felucca, making more sail, as if in chase, and firing one of our two guns, at the same time hoisting an English white ensign and a long pendant.

This manœuvre had its effect for the moment; the felucca, apprehensive she had made a mistake, tacked immediately, and seemed very anxious to effect an escape, which we were willing enough to facilitate; and, by way of encouraging, we managed to tow a lower studding-sail overboard on the weather-quarter. The felucca was about two points on our lee-bow, going rap full with a fresh breeze, and we kept her in that point apparently to preserve the weather-gage, but in reality to tow our studding-sail unperceived; by degrees, as the felucca increased her distance, she kept closer to the wind, until having fore-reached considerably, she tacked and crossed our bows out of range: we shifted our tow to the lee-beam, and congratulated ourselves that our *ruse* had succeeded. When the Spaniard was exactly on our weather-beam he tacked and shortened sail, to ascertain his superiority as to sailing; and he kept, after he was assured of our inferiority, first edging down within very long range, and then hauling his wind, as if doubtful as to our being a man-of-war, or a vessel of inferior force to himself. As the wind had considerably died away,

Captain Smith was resolved to make another demonstration as to force, in the shape of shaking a reef out: before, however, we began, he warned the men of the necessity of scudding up the rigging together, and doing the thing in a real man-of-war style, instructing them to come down by the topsail-halyards, in order to run the sails up to the mast-head with proper rapidity. In this we again succeeded; the felucca seemed convinced that we were what we seemed, and when we fired another gun she made more sail, and crept farther up to windward.

But she kept us well within sight, and never attempted to get away. This caused no trifling uneasiness, for, although the Rapid looked very like a man-of-war, was neat in her rigging aloft, and showed, although they were *quakers*,* a row of teeth with ten ports of a side, still it was evident that the felucca was not entirely satisfied that we were what we appeared, or she would have availed herself of her speed, and very shortly have left us all alone on the waters.

It was past noon when she bore up and steered for us, showing a Spanish ensign, and, when within long point and blank range, she hauled upon a wind. We immediately began to fire; but the captain of the felucca, observing that the fire always came from the two foremost ports, although she was right a-beam of us, guessed we were a sheep in wolf's clothing, and concluded that we were not quite so strong as we wished him to believe: he therefore commenced firing himself from a long gun on a swivel which we saw between his masts. His first shot fell over us a long way to leeward, the second went through the main-topsail, and the third cut away the main-topgallant yard: hands were immediately sent aloft to shift the yard, and they certainly evinced considerable alacrity in executing this duty. We now found that the felucca was resolved to maintain the fight; the captain therefore gave directions to haul the studding-sail on board, and we bore up and endeavoured to effect our escape. It was useless; the felucca sailed like a witch, and overhauled us fast, her decks appeared crowded with men, and we could distinctly see the flash of the sun as its rays fell on the cutlasses. Captain Smith now began a battle oration to his men. It ran thus:

* Quakers are imitation guns.

"My fine fellows, Fortune has again placed us in an awkward predicament, and certainly has not chosen the best time, in regard to us, to show her spite. I need not tell you, my gallant shipmates, what a desperate chance we have to contend against; for pirates, and this felucca is one, take good care not to have many witnesses against them in the event of their success. 'Dead men,' they say, 'tell no tales;' and, therefore, no sooner are the pirates in possession of their prize, than they murder the crew, and after plundering the vessel generally burn them. I could, my lads, tell of cruelties practised by these ruffians which would be sufficient to make a lamb fight, or rather to fall under the knife in open contest, than be butchered in cold blood: but I know you all well enough; the little Rapid will not be taken without a struggle, and I know you will fight to the last. If it was probable that any advantage would result from showing the felucca we were not worth the loss of blood which must follow, I would cheerfully heave-to, and allow her boat to come on board; but if once they are satisfied that we are unable to make a good resistance, that instant our lives would not be, in their estimation, of the value of a straw. It is not the first time we have had a brush of this kind, and I have seen you stand firm under a worse danger; so now, my lads, let us think only on the certainty of our success. When she ranges up along-side, you will find me at my post; I am not afraid that I shall not be well supported. So," said he in conclusion, "now for the trial: they may be more in number, but you all know that one Englishman is worth three Spaniards, and the odds are not more than that, I am sure. Stand firm for the first attack; only beat them back once, and they will never hazard it again. Look at that flag, my gallant fellows," said he, pointing to the ensign; "that flag alone will make us nearly a match for the pirates, and our determination and our courage shall do the rest."

No cheer followed the close of the speech,—no one started forward to re-echo the spirited words; the crew were evidently crest-fallen and beaten before the action began; and when the grape-shot, which the chase now and then honoured us with, flew over the ship, the dastardly crew cowered under the bulwarks; some called out to heave-to and surrender, and with the exception of the cap-

tain and the mate, there was not a countenance which did not seem blanched with fear. Young as I was, I saw what the result would be. The felucca gained on us rapidly, and by four o'clock in the afternoon she was within half-pistol shot on our larboard quarter, steering right alongside of us, and showing evident intentions of boarding.

CHAPTER IX.*

In vain, in vain; alas! ye gallant few;
From rank to rank your volleying thunder flew.
CAMPBELL.

As the action was inevitable, it was judged prudent to avail ourselves of all advantages; we therefore began a pretty brisk fire of musketry, our two guns were brought aft, and our utmost care was used in vain to hit either a mast or a yard on the felucca. The chase was growing fast to a close, the wind had died away, and the sea no longer was running high. The captain called his men aft, formed them into two divisions, one of which he headed himself, and kept close under the starboard bulwark; the other was under the command of the mate, and was kept on the gangway, in order to repel the felucca's men, should they board farther forward than was anticipated. She steered gallantly for the quarter, and, running alongside of us, began the contest by instantly jumping on board the Rapid. Some endeavoured and ultimately succeeded in fastening the felucca's larboard-bow to the main chains of the Rapid. The first Spaniard who planted his foot on the deck was dead before he could strike a blow. The captain, who stood as calmly as a statue, awaited his coming; but the instant he had jumped from the netting, and before he reached the deck, a cutlass was thrust up to the hilt in his body. The next man was seriously wounded and dis-

* The events recorded in this chapter actually befell the St. Helena schooner and her crew: they were captured by a Spanish pirate, but did not make the most decided resistance.

abled. But they came on fearlessly: the increase of numbers soon overcame all resistance, and they effected a landing on the starboard side of the quarter-deck. Our men gradually gave way; and I, dreadfully frightened at the approach of our enemies, ran up the larboard main rigging, and sheltered myself in the main-top. The smoke from the firing covered my retreat; and when, panting with fear and anxiety, I had squeezed myself through lubber's hole, and had thrown myself flat down, I saw Waters in the same position, watching the fight, from the starboard side of the top. I observed the fray, which thus continued. The party belonging to the mate joined that of the captain, and they made a vigorous charge aft. The captain calling out for some one to cut away the peak and throat halyards, so as to let the boom mainsail down on the heads of the Spaniards, Waters instantly took his knife, saying, "That is a good thought!" but he unfortunately cut the peak halyards first:—down went the peak, but it jammed the jaws of the gaff so close against the mast, that, when the throat halyards were cut, the sail still remained suspended. Had the captain charged as the peak fell, he might have dislodged his adversaries, for they were for a moment embarrassed by the loose canvass: but they instantly advanced, and, forming a double line abreast of the companion, they not only withstood the attack, but succeeded in repulsing the crew. The mate, with some hands, had made an attempt by endeavouring to get aft the larboard side, and a man to man fight ensued. The Spaniards, who had wound round their left arms a kind of blanket called a poncho, which is generally worn over the shoulders, used this as a shield, stopping every blow by offering their left arms, thus guarded, to the strong blow of the cutlass, when they rushed on, and with short daggers generally succeeded in their work of destruction. Both divisions of the Rapid's men were now on the gangways, when Captain Smith made another desperate charge to beat back his foes: no words can tell how gallantly, how gloriously he strove against his cloud of enemies; no numbers could force him back; and although assailed at one time by no less than four, he bravely stood his ground. He had raised his arm to strike to the deck the captain of the Spanish privateer, when one of the Spaniards interposed, and for a moment, by entangling the cutlass, left the whole

person of the captain defenceless; his son at that instant crept under his arm and shot the interposing person, who fell. The crew, reanimated by the gallantry of the action, cheered aloud, and had not fresh assistance come from the felucca at that moment, I think we might yet have won the day. The rush of the fresh men prevented the retreat of the front rank; and, urged on from behind, they advanced in spite of Smith, and in a few seconds our men were again on the gangways. Both parties seemed nearly vanquished by fatigue, and for the space of a couple of minutes a cessation of hostilities took place. To me this was the most dreadful sight: the Spaniards from the felucca still continued to strengthen their party by adding fresh numbers; the vessels were alongside of each other, and I could see on the decks of the pirate still more men than were sufficient at the beginning of the conflict to have captured the Rapid. I saw how perfectly useless was the struggle, and I knew what must be the result. Our men appeared dispirited, all but the captain: he cheered them on; he pointed to those he had slain; he urged the men to another more desperate attempt; he told them that the worst of deaths awaited their cowardice; and it were ten thousand times better to fall in the moment of battle, than coldly and deliberately to be exposed to the brutal violence and unrelenting butchery of the Spaniards. "Come on! come on!" he cried; and, waving his sword, advanced among the enemies: he was followed by his men, who tried all that desperation could effect to change the fortune of the day—but too late—the Spaniards, flushed with the success of their having gained the quarter-deck, stood firm against the assault of the crew, succeeded in repulsing them, and then followed up their advantage.

Ah! this is indeed the secret of success in life! when once the first step is gained, persevere—never relax—and the conquest is certain; only give one moment's breathing-time for the cool calculation of the other party, only allow the kind intervention of your most sincere friend, and, my life to the value of a chestnut, you fail;—success must be gathered on the instant; follow up the first false step of your adversary, and he is ruined!

As the Rapid's men gave ground, the Spaniard's persevered in pressing them the closer. On the gangways the fight was long sustained, until by the accumulation of num-

bers, overpowered by the fresh force, and sinking under fatigue and exhaustion, our men made a precipitate retreat to the forecastle. Here again they rallied, but for a short space of time: the day was won; all chances gone; the craven spirit had manifested itself, and one by one the crew retreated down the fore hatchway.

No sooner was their retreat perceived by the Spaniards than they made a desperate rush on the remainder; and after a fruitless effort for success, and the last defiance of Smith, he presented his pistol at his nearest foe,—it missed fire; he threw the unfaithful weapon full in the face of his adversary, and before the man could recover from the blow, the captain had followed his men below, and the enemy were in undisputed possession of the upper deck. They instantly placed the hatches on, and nailed them, and then quietly sat down and refreshed themselves: their enemies were safe; no further resistance of any consequence could be made; the victors were preparing their last revenge; and very shortly I was doomed to be the witness of unparalleled cruelty and demoniacal barbarity.

With what a searching eye did I sweep the horizon in hopes of discovering a strange sail!—but none was visible; I saw but the picture of eternity in the never-ending waters; the sun was sinking in all its glorious splendour, never again to gladden the eyes of many, and even the bright tints which streaked some of the higher clouds seemed but a mockery of a future promise; my heart sank within me, and a deep, deep sigh escaped. Waters looked at me, and bade me be still as death, or that our murder would follow: he hardly dared to articulate the words, and my fears were increased tenfold from the despairing look of my comrade.

On the quarter-deck there lay five dead Spaniards; the wounded had limped away and regained the felucca, and only the dead or dying were left. I could not see how many more of the enemy were despatched, for about this time the Spaniards had begun their work of destruction, by cutting away the rigging: one man cut the main-topsail halyards, and the yard coming down, left the sail bagging over the top-brim, so as entirely to obstruct the view I had formerly got of the forecastle, between the foot-rope and the mainstay. Our attention could now only be directed to the quarter-deck, through lubber's hole; for we did not dare risk the chance of looking over the top.

One or two more energetic than the rest of the Spaniards soon launched three of the dead men through an open port on the larboard side: others had descended into the cabin, and returned on deck with some spirits and wine; they seemed very indifferent about their prize; most probably from having found her quite empty as to a cargo. My attention was suddenly awakened by a shriek from a female—we had three left on board: it was a charm to the ear of the Spaniards; they rushed to the companion, from which aperture the cry issued, and shortly we saw the poor victim of the captain's brutality brought upon deck by two men, each of whom endeavoured to claim her as his prize: words ran high, the affrighted girl screamed for mercy.—Mercy from Spanish pirates! Alas! that cry was unheeded. That one woman was on board was evident, and therefore more might be: the main hatch was taken off, and fearlessly some of the pirates descended. They soon found the other two slaves; who, after experiencing the horrid brutality of their masters, were conveyed on board the felucca. Again the Spaniards seated themselves by the combings of the hatchway, and revived all their horrible murderous intentions by continued draughts of spirits. The sun was fast sinking, and night approaching; savage intoxication soon warned them of their remaining duty before they retired to rest; and now began the dreadful close of that day of murder.

I saw only one remaining Spaniard who was dead left on the deck; and I beheld one of our men—it was the cooper—goaded on at the point of the pirates' daggers to where the corpse was lying: they lifted the dead to an erect position, and enfolding the neck of our man in the still supple arms of the Spaniard, lashed the hands of the dead man together; with horrible, half drunken, and frantic joy, they then tied the hands of the cooper round the back of the Spaniard, and goading the living victim with their swords, shouted a maddening yell: then laughing and singing as they turned them round, they conveyed the unresisting cooper to the gangway, and calling out, "Adios, amigo mio," pushed him towards the side:—his foot caught against a coil of rope, which in the scuffle had been kicked to that situation, the balance was lost, and the living and the dead went head foremost into the ocean. Not a cloud darkened the sun when such ruffian murder was committed; no thun-

der roared to manifest God's awful displeasure at this infernal deed; but a shout of joy followed the consummation of the act, and a hellish laugh was the burial service of the dead.

I looked up at Waters: his blanched face, his pale lips, his trembling figure, indicated his worst apprehensions; he did not dare articulate one word, but kept his trembling finger on his mouth, to warn me of my danger, and the necessity of silence. It was now a dead calm; the sun went down in all its glory, as if it smiled upon the deed; there was scarcely a cloud to darken the heavens, and already in the east the stars had begun to shine: above us, all was still and hushed, all nature seemed to smile; below, the drunken riot of the murderous pirates broke the silence of the evening, and the ineffectual struggle of some of our men, as they resisted the endeavours of the Spaniards to force them on deck, was the prelude to other deeds of murder.

Two more victims were brought up, and lashed together; these were tied back to back; one seemed anxious to close his career and jump overboard; the other, still clinging to the remnant of his miserable existence, or fearful from his numerous crimes to meet his fate, strenuously opposed the efforts of his comrade. The Spaniards laughed at the struggle; and as either party came near, they wounded them with their swords, and goaded them towards the gang-way; at last, he that was most resolute gave a sudden plunge, and both were in the water. Then it was that the diabolical feelings of the pirates were most excited; both endeavoured to swim, and for a few seconds they succeeded; but as they neared the ship, the rope which an apparently friendly hand had offered to their succour was withdrawn, or only the wet end allowed to touch their hands, when it was jerked from their hold, and they were again left to the grave,—into which they ultimately descended, after a more than human exertion, to cling to the faithless succour.

The next that was brought on deck was Captain Smith. His son leaped up immediately, and clung to him with all the strong hold of affection. The captain knew his end was come, and looked at the captain of the felucca, who had nearly fallen under his arm, and who was now very unconcernedly smoking a segar, appealing for pity in regard to his

son; for himself, he seemed quite prepared to meet his fate, and approached the gangway with a fearless unconcern. The youth riveted his arms round his father's neck, and cried out with all the excited feelings of a boy who could not reconcile himself to his inevitable death. "Oh, save me! save me, father!" cried the poor half-distracted creature; "save me from these men! what are these ruffians going to do with us?" At this moment some of the pirates tore young Smith from his father, and walked him to the captain of the felucca, who, running his quick eye over the pale face of the youngster, shook his head, puffed out a long line of smoke, and on his giving a glance at one of his men, the youngster was released, and again ran into his father's arms. Smith made no resistance as the pirates lashed his son to him; the affrighted boy screamed most dreadfully, imploring his father to save him for his mother's sake; he endeavoured to kneel down, and held his hands, which were left free, in the manner of supplication. The father never shed a tear, but looked undaunted and undismayed; and yet he seemed to linger on the deck, like one who would willingly have lived, if only for his son's sake. The lashing being completed, the pirates, who were anxious to finish their work of destruction, said, "Via usted con dios," and gave the victims a push towards that ill-fated gangway.

"Oh, father! father! stop, stop, stop,—only for one minute,—father, only for one minute. Oh, look at me! I will not be drowned; oh, my poor mother! oh, save me! save me!" This seemed to disconcert the captain, for he stopped, and seemed actually insensible to the pain he must have experienced from the application of a sword: he looked down upon his son's face, and I thought I saw, indistinctly as I could see, a tear fall. His son looked imploringly on the countenance of his father; his eyes seemed to read a hope of escape even when it was most useless and most unpromising. Ah! how long we cling to hope, even when its rainbow has lost its brightest colours; how fondly we cling to the last tint, although the eye may see it gradually fading from the view! and fervently even at death's gaping door we imagine an escape, and hope glimmers even in the darkest of adversity.

The captain, having bent his head forward, and kissed the forehead of his son, who was screaming with the worst an-

ticipation, lifted him from the deck, and walking steadily to the gangway, jumped into the water, and sunk to rise no more; but, as he fell, we heard one loud scream, which the sea of eternity hushed for ever.

The rest of the crew were disposed of in the same manner, the Spaniards enjoying the scene of destruction, and occasionally making some unfeeling remarks as the poor sufferer seemed afraid to meet his untimely end; the last fared the worst, for the pirates were now in a state of intoxication, and gave way to all the most diabolical barbarities which the human mind, brutalized by the almost total abandonment of reason, could suggest.

The scene had now closed: those who were the most careful and sober had visited every part of the ship below, and reported to their captain that no living witness remained to blab the horrible tale, they returned to the felucca, having demolished all they could demolish, having plundered all they could plunder, and having destroyed all they could destroy. There were only four, the last lingerers on the stage of murder, when it occurred to them to examine the tops, and we felt the unwelcome footstep on the rigging as a Spaniard planted his step upon the main-ratlines: he had ascended nearly half-mast high, when he stopped, in consequence of the pirate captain hailing him. Oh! the pain—the hope—the dread of that moment I would not have return to me now for all the gold of Peru: the murders I had witnessed; the sure, the certain, inevitable fate which would follow our discovery; the shiver of death before the reality,—oh! no pen can relate, no tongue could tell, however gifted with the stream of eloquence, or softened by the tenderest heart, the feelings I at that moment experienced; and I doubt if at that moment I did not feel more than had my death followed. It is said that the worst apprehension of death is felt at the moment the awful *guilty* is returned; the human mind thus suddenly stricken when the last gleam of hope is destroyed, is beaten down to its lowest point of degradation, and the moments, few indeed, between the sentence and the execution, are sufficient for a vigorous reaction; then the common courage of the animal returns, and few there are who do not spur on their fortitude to the bold daring of death, even in its worst, its most degrading, most dreaded shape.

The summons of the captain had been attended to, and we saw our demon retreating slowly down the rigging. The man who went forward had arrived in the fore-top and called out that no one was aloft, a minute previous to the hail of the captain to the man in the main-rigging; the main-topsail entirely screened us from the observation of the Spaniard; he descended rapidly, he ran along the deck, and jumping over the quarter was on board the felucca. A light breeze had sprung up when the sun set, the lashings were cast adrift, and in a few minutes the pirate was under all sail standing away from the hull of the Rapid, to which we afterward discovered they had set fire below, but by the goodness of Providence the fire was extinguished, and no serious injury was done to the hull.

When the felucca was about half pistol shot they hove-to, and commenced firing at the hull, with an intention, no doubt, of sinking her. Of this amusement they very shortly grew tired, and, after one or two rather random shots, they trimmed their sails, hauled close upon a wind, and were in a short time at a respectable distance, and hardly discernible. So completely had fear worked upon us, that we never exchanged a word until now, and we began in a whisper, but as we gained confidence, we talked in our common pitch of voice, and agreed upon one point, which was, that we had better remain where we were until the felucca should be entirely out of sight.

I have no doubt we should have acted up to our cautious resolution, had not the smell of smoke aroused us to our peril another shape. The fire kindled below had never burnt fiercely, and the smoke must have ascended before the main-mast. We were now convinced of our danger, and descended rapidly: I felt an indescribable horror as I jumped on the deck, but the necessity of active exertion to render our forlorn bark a haven of security prompted us to lose no time in extinguishing the flames. The fire had been lighted by a drunken man, or we must have been sacrificed; some small pieces of wood were placed *near it*, and some rope, which had been cut in junks and untwisted, lay also clear of the flames: the fire had been kindled at the foot of the fore hatchway, and had partly consumed the ladder. We found a bucket, and the water was not far distant; in ten minutes

the flame was entirely extinguished, and we were safe from every danger.

Waters was an active sailor: he began to repair the damages forward, and I stood by him, for I was afraid to leave his side, notwithstanding we had searched every hole and corner of the vessel, and we were both quite certain that no other living creature but ourselves was on board: still I shuddered to approach the larboard gangway, over which every one of the crew had been forced; and I shuddered to be left to my own thoughts, for they were of too melancholy a nature to brood over. About nine o'clock at night Waters had managed to splice the ropes which the Spaniards had destroyed, and we ventured with some exertion to brace the head-yards forward, intending to steer back to the slaves, in order to regain our two men whom we had left on shore. But as to carrying sail, that was rather a dangerous expedient, for the pirates had cut the lanyards of the lower rigging, and all our efforts to render the masts secure were ineffectual: however, as the wind was light, we braced the yards to the position required, and then we both came aft to the wheel.

The night was beautifully fine, and before we had ventured to alter the position of the yards, we had well ascertained that the felucca was out of sight, and fortunately our course lay exactly the reverse of that which she had shaped. It blew but a gentle breeze, and, although going well free, we scarcely could hear the water break under the cutwater: we looked at each other with a doubtful, misgiving eye; we were alone on the face of the ocean, and uncertain if the provisions had not been destroyed, the water started, and starvation at hand. Never, perhaps, does life supply such reflections as at a moment like that in question: our whole crew murdered; the vessel, which before was all animation and bustle, suddenly a sepulchre as to silence; no cheering sound, connected with the duty of the ship, to turn our thoughts into a more cheerful channel: the scene of the slaughter we now rested upon, and every mark on the deck reminded us too strongly of the desperate struggle. On the very spot where I sat, the captain had nearly turned the tide of victory when the pirate was on the point of being despatched: and when I remembered his courageous bearing at his last moment—his kindness to me since I had saved his

life, I forgot all his treachery to entrap me, and all his false and broken promises when we passed the Saturn.

We must have remained nearly an hour lost in our own meditations, for neither of us spoke, when Waters, after looking at me attentively, said, "Well, Ganjam, you are young to have shared so many dangers and difficulties, and far better would it have been for both of us, perhaps, if this day had been our last; for who knows but that we are only reserved for, if possible, a worse fate! It's very still here just now, is it not, my boy?"

Still as death, who has been too busy this day, I thought; for I did not answer.

"Well, my lad," said Waters, "we must not droop under our misfortunes; while we live we have always hope of better days, and, come what may, we can but die at last; and so all the dark frowns of mischance may yet give place to brighter scenes, and a happy return to our parents and friends."

I caught at the sound: "And have you," I replied, "a mother, who lives, and who is uncertain of your fate? have you a sister who loves and regards you? and have you a nurse who watched over your younger days, and who, with the eye of devotedness, comforted you in all hours of youthful miseries?"

"Yes," said Waters, "I have a mother, and I have a wife. Better had it been ten thousand times that the first had never bore me, or the latter never accepted me; from my birth to this day I never remember to have experienced one day's unalloyed happiness; on me the real sun of life has never shone, and perhaps, at this moment, I might command more pleasure than I ever have known, for here, at least, none can command me, and it is my servitude which has made me more cursed than even misfortune with all her frowns. But you, youngster, have all to hope, you cannot be worse off than at present, and therefore you must cheer up, and lend me a willing hand until some assistance shall fall in our way. If the breeze stands, and we hit the right part of the coast, we can manage the brig enough to get her somewhere or another; and if we do miss the island, we can always run on shore, and then we shall not perhaps much better our situation, but I doubt if we should make it much worse."

"What's that?" said I, pointing to the larboard gangway, and clinging close to Waters; "what's that?"

"Eh!" replied Waters; "where?"

"There, there!" said I, trembling like a leaf; "moving backwards and forwards, and looking so dark—there, there again!"

"Why, you foolish boy, how you frightened me! it's only the clew of the mainsail, which is shaking right in the way of the moon: I should have known it at first, had it not been upon that gangway, and I don't like much to look at it. It was a desperate leap the captain took; and how his boy clung to him, and prayed him to remain a little longer! he did not die like his father."

"He was too great a tyrant," I replied, "to be a brave man. Never did that little monster allow any opportunity of vexatious tyranny to escape him; even the poor little black wretch whom he had hooped up in the cask led ten thousand times a worse life from the moment she became subject to the capriciousness of young Smith. But he has met the fate he had destined her to meet, and he felt more at his last moment than even his ingenuity as a tyrant could inflict on his victim."

"Did you see the mate," said Waters, "strike the Spaniard, when he attempted to lash him?"

"No," I replied; "after the captain's death my eyes swam so that I saw nothing distinctly. I don't remember even when the mate was thrown overboard."

"Thrown overboard!" said Waters; "he jumped overboard before they could lash him to some one else, and although he could swim like a fish, he sunk like a stone. He was more of the devil than man; and he may thank the captain that he lived as long as he did, for we had some idea of saving him and the slaves the trouble of drinking the water before we went to the island."

"Indeed!" I replied; "and how did you intend to do this?"

"Never mind asking, youngster; the day is past, and he is at rest without my assistance. Now I am thinking, that while I steer you had better go down in the fore-hold and see if we have any water or provisions on board; and afterward you can rummage the cabin-lockers, and see what

those gentlemen Spaniards have left us to live upon for a day or two. Come, sheer along."

"No, no, Waters," said I; "down in that hold I will not go by myself; if I go you must go, or you must wait until daylight, then I shall not care to venture."

"Did you never hear the mate say that 'dead men tell no tales?'" said Waters.

"Yes, I did," I replied; "and once I heard you say so."

"When?" asked Waters, with a fierce expression of countenance; "when did you hear me make use of those very words?"

I remained silent from fear; for all the devil with which human nature is sometimes invested seemed to rise from his heart and rest upon his features. I knew that for my life Waters did not care one straw; and if he thought he could have managed the brig himself, and that his guilty conscience did not require a companion to scare away recollection, he would have impressed those fearful words more strongly on me, and would, had an opportunity offered, have disposed of the brig, and had no living witness to rise up against him. But solitude is no friend to guilt; then does conscience hold a sovereign sway, and the mind, unoccupied by external objects, or hardly roused into action from the want of that greatest requisite and comfort, one to receive and to respond, only looks upon the large mirror of the past, and sees in the reflection all the dark dangers and damnable deeds with which the retrospect is cursed. There may conscience see slight acts which, had they been generously done, might have saved a friend from ruin; then some lurking intrigue, which, during the inflammation of the desire, had been regarded as trivial in offence, and had been followed with all the ardour of unbridled passion, without regard to the days of misery it entailed—may peep through the background of the scene. Days and nights wasted in idleness and debauchery; the one almost gone before known to exist, the other usurping the place of the former; the minutes which should have been devoted to refreshing wearied nature having been spent in drunken revelry, indecent and unhallowed carousing, filthy songs, and the greater degradation of the mind by a forced aberration of intellect! In that large mirror of the mind how few generous, truly laudable acts appear! for see the end of each man's opinion

of life—it is comprised in one word, "comfort;" that seems "the consummation so devoutly to be wished;" and, when it is attained, what is existence? To rise when laziness is fatigued of sleep—to eat—to shorten life by running heedlessly through it; to eat again, to loll on a silken sofa or easy-chair, and then, when weary of the nothing we have done, once more to sleep, until the revolution of time and its flight has fatigued laziness again; and so on, until the last syllable of recorded time;—and then our friends to take care we are velveted and bedizened in death, a lying epitaph, the undertaker paid, and—farewell, man! Let any being sum up his existence, and see how much the picture is overdrawn; then only ask himself how much out of the threescore and ten years has been devoted to useful and laudable labour; and out of the millions of people who have drawn the fountain of life, how many names are there left to save humanity from the sweeping clause of universal idleness and uselessness? I am sick of the reflection, for I acknowledge its truth and its importance.

I looked at Waters as if I would have read his very heart: if I had told him when I had heard him express those words, he would have known that I had heard him pronounce my own doom; and, consequently, would have felt that I clung to him, not from friendship, cemented by the blood of others, but from the fear of the calamity he had sentenced me to. I felt terror-stricken, and did not answer.

He was standing at the wheel on the starboard side, his left arm leaning over the upper spoke; I was seated on the deck close by his feet: he waited with some impatience, until finding I remained silent, he gave me a smart kick, and said, "Do you intend to answer me, you young hound? if you don't, I'll pitch you over that gangway, be assured."

Finding it was useless to evade the question, I boldly told him when I heard him so express himself, and I confessed that I instantly told the captain, because, in the destruction he had meditated, I was included. I urged him to remember that, by my having so interfered, his conscience was relieved of a load which would have remained an unwilling and an unbidden guest when he least required or wished it.

"Conscience!" said he; "that's a rum thing, that conscience, after all; for," he continued, "my conscience told

me that I should make a bad fight of it with the pirate, so I stowed myself away to avoid proving it true. Well," said he, "there is no harm done, as it turns out: but you had a narrow squeak for your life that night."

We remained on deck the whole night; the vessel going very steadily through the water, and the breeze continuing without either failing or freshening, we lashed the wheel, and both fell asleep.

In the morning we were holding the same course, and when daylight was fairly established, we both went below to examine into the quantity of our provisions. We found that we had enough for a year at least, and that the water was sufficient for our sustenance for two or three months; therefore, as we had no fear of present starvation, we kept our spirits up with the reflection that, although we were alone, we had a ship to ourselves, no master to order, and no slave to obey. When two people, and only two, are together in the world, they soon drop all distinction, and Friday with Robinson Crusoe soon rose from slave to equal.

We were unfortunate enough to fall in with another tornado, which split our sails to rags, leaving us only the fore and main courses, which, before the breeze came on, we had contrived to secure. We were blown again off the land, and taking at the conclusion of the gale the easterly trade-wind, we steered across the Atlantic to the West Indies. This was the most fatiguing part of the whole of my life, because we were obliged to steer the vessel, if we intended making any land at all; and I found that, when my watch was out, Waters was by no means very active in relieving me, but, on the contrary, long before his was expired he would turn me out. We had nothing set but the foresail and a fore-topmast staysail, so that we could not well broach-to; and, if we did, it would not have signified much, as the breeze in the trades is always pretty steady, and the sea does not run at that frightful height to cause any serious damage.

Waters understood navigation very fairly, but the Spaniards had not left us quadrant or sextant; we therefore shaped our course by the breeze, keeping always directly before it, and being well assured that it did not change materially by the rising and setting of the sun. For days and days we continued the same monotonous life, not once seeing a vessel; at

last, Waters said that we must be near the American coast, for that we had been more than thirty days slipping at a good pace through the sea, and that at night we must be more vigilant, for on what part of the coast we should fall was a matter of great uncertainty: as for latitude or longitude, we were in happy ignorance of either. We contrived to bend our cable, and get ready those little things which are required when ships anchor in a hurry; an axe, the only one left on board, was placed forwards and lashed close to the stoppers, so that in one moment we could cut the anchor adrift: these preparations made, we felt more at rest, for men never sleep so well as when they fancy they are secured by previous prudence from any untoward occurrence.

"I have been thinking, Ganjam," said Waters, "that if we could hit any part of the coast which is not much frequented, we might yet get this craft to some port, where we could sell her; and I see no reason why we should not pocket the money and start for ourselves; for Widow Smith will never hear any more of her, and she will be kind enough to think we are drowned with the rest. At any rate, we may as well get ready if a chance should occur, and therefore we will begin and paint some other name on her stern: I dare say you can handle the paint-brush well enough for that; so you may begin as quickly as you like."

It suddenly occurred to me that Waters, who was swinging a grating over the stern, intended when I was on it to cut me adrift. Why the thought came across me I know not, for latterly we had been like brothers—misfortune being a great friend-maker. In vain I argued upon the improbability of such an occurrence, knowing that land was not in sight, and that by himself he could not manage to steer the ship night and day; still the warning voice we sometimes hear, and seldom heed, distinctly told me not to get upon that grating. Well, thought I to myself, if he does intend to drown me, he can do that at any time, for I am nothing in his arms; and when a man has made up his mind to commit a murder, it matters little if it is done by a knife cutting a rope and drowning you, or cutting a throat and finishing you. But that reflection arose from ignorance of the human mind: no man likes the performance of a deed of blood; when the victim can be distinctly seen, the eye of the innocent pierces the heart's core of a murderer: it is in

darkness that the deed of death is done; for then the human glance is deprived of its power, and the cowardly hand of the assassin strikes undismayed. We were familiar enough with the dead, and had seen enough of murder to hate the name. My cunning suggested an excuse. "I see," said I, "exactly what you mean; but it would be a bad plan to rub the name out *now;* for if we should fall in with any English man-of-war, our having done so (for they will be sure to find it out) would be a strong presumptive proof that we had somehow got rid of the crew ourselves, and the story of the pirate would be discredited. I think if we were to wait until we made the land, then, if no vessel was in sight, and we could get into some creek, the thing could be easily done, and no suspicion would arise."

Waters eyed me like a man who pierces the heart of another to see if he is suspected. I did not waver in the least: I had so framed my mind, from the knowledge that I was in a den with a tame tiger and uncertain when he might pounce upon me, that I had schooled myself to coolness and deliberation; and I taught myself more in the six weeks I was with him than all the schoolmasters in England could have inculcated. I learned this, that self-possession was better than strength; that the wary man is more than a match for the strong; and that in this as in every thing else—knowledge is power.

"Why," said Waters, "there may be something in all that; but I don't think we are ever to see another craft: here have we been running right across the ocean, and never seen a stitch of canvass but our own; and d—n me," said he, "if I don't think the land has got under way too, and is sailing the same course as ourselves. Well, we'll leave the daubing till another time; but we must be quick and do it when we make land. Jump," said he, "and keep a bit of a look-out for it ahead."

I did not mind this, for I knew he could not cut the foremast away; so I went up, and perched myself on the topmast cross-trees. No land was visible; the horizon was as clear as the daylight itself, around us the same uninterrupted boundary encircled us—not a ship, nor a haze, nor a cloud for fancy to form into a hillock. It was now getting fast towards sunset, and Waters called me down, saying he would look out himself. I came to the wheel, and he went

aloft: he remained there until it was quite dark, when he came and sat himself down by the wheel, having got some grog and a biscuit. He was very downcast, and imagined all manner of inconsistent things; first about our having gone too far to the southward; then, that we had been swept up to the northward; and at last he said, "D—n me, but I wish we could make the land, even if we run upon it and lost our lives; for this existence is hardly worth holding, if we are to hope and never see it realized."

CHAPTER X.

Then first one universal rent there rush'd,
  Louder than the loud ocean—like a crash
Of echoing thunder, and then all was hush'd—
  Save the wild wind and the remorseless dash
Of billows.—— BYRON.

It was a cloudless night; one of those beautiful hours when the stars seem, from their brightness, to have come closer to the earth; the breeze had rather freshened, and we were going at the rate of six knots an hour. It was about midnight, and Waters had just roused up to relieve me: he seemed sad; and when he took the helm, said, "Good-night, boy, and may you sleep better than I have done; for the captain came to me, and stood by my hammock, and I shake so that I must not be left alone: so lie down here on the deck, and I'll cover you up." He was certainly much agitated; and as he communicated his fears to me, he need not have asked me to lie down near him; I would rather have jumped overboard than have gone below.

I was dozing when I heard him say, "Lord, Lord, if it should be so, my time is not far off." I looked—Waters had his eyes fixed upon the clear moon, and the wan and haggard air of his countenance frightened me into activity; I jumped up and said, "What do you see, Waters?"—"Nothing, nothing, boy," he resumed, "but we shall soon know the worst."

Restless from his changed manner, and with the idea of

the grating still upon my mind, I arose and stood by his side. "I think," I said, "the wind has freshened very much, and the sea seems to be breaking more than it did; I don't know what it is, but I feel very oddly, and as if something was going to happen; and look," said I, "how black the horizon is astern."

"Well," said Waters, "if it blows hard enough to blow the devil's horns off his head, we have little to fear with the sail we have set; but it does look dark and squally, and it makes me think we are getting near the land, for the whole feeling of the weather seems to have changed. If you don't feel inclined to sleep, you may as well keep your eye fixed on the horizon there, for the sea seems to come sweeping past us with that hollow noise that I don't like, although I see nothing to fear."

The cloud gradually extended itself over the whole of the eastern part of the horizon; the breeze freshened in small gusts, and about one o'clock a heavy squall came on, bringing with it one of those tropical showers through which it is quite impossible to see ten yards; the sea roared alongside; the two fore-sheets seemed stretched to their utmost, and the foresail bellied forward against the fore-stay: we seemed to fly through the water; the white foam sparkled as we passed it, and we might be fairly said to be scudding in a gale. Waters steered her steadily right before the wind. The clouds had now covered the moon, and we could see and hear nothing but the break of the sea, and the roar of the wind.

"It is a dark business this," said he, "and I should like to round her to, for we must near the land, and may be soon on it; and yet we should have seen it at sunset if we had been so close as I think we are."

"How shall we get the foresail off her?" I replied; "we never could get it secured in such a breeze as this, and if we split it we shall be badly off."

"We must make the best of it we can," said he; "just look over the starboard gangway and see if you can discover any thing."

I jumped upon the netting, but could distinguish nothing but a line of surf, apparently the breakers of the sea from the violence of the wind. He told me to steer for a moment, while he looked; no sooner did he fix his eagle glance in

the direction we were steering, than he called out, "Lord, Lord, save us! hard a starboard the helm! bring her to! bring her to!" As he said this, he jumped from the netting, and putting the helm down, the vessel broached-to; the sea, as she flew up to the wind, came clean over her broadside, the foresail flapped with the noise of thunder, and ultimately was blown out of the bolt-rope, while the fore-topmast stay-sail was split from top to bottom. Each sea, from the want of sail to steady the ship, came right on board of us, and the vessel rolled about in the trough, of course perfectly unmanageable. To windward all was darkness and murkiness, and close on the lee-beam we thought we saw the breakers as they rolled over a reef of rocks; the sea was white with foam, and the wind seemed to increase rather than to lull. We both looked like the forlorn and frightened wretches we were. Now the appalling scene appeared the worst we had faced, for present dangers always seem the greatest; we said not a word: Waters' long hair was blowing behind him as he kept his eye to windward; and I, unable to face the storm, kept looking at the white surf to leeward. We might have been about an hour in this situation, when the wind suddenly lulled, and we heard distinctly the roar of the sea as it broke upon the shore—that deep-toned sound which only frightened sailors know, which long and long reverberates as it rolls. How long we were to live was most uncertain; we could do nothing to save ourselves: we could make no sail; we could launch no boat; we were unable to form a raft; every minute made the danger the more evident; the rough dash of the ocean as it burst upon the rocks was more distinctly heard, and the long low hollow murmur, as the returning wave ebbed back into the sea, was too evident to admit of hope. Why lengthen description? The Rapid, rolling and reeling under the control of the elements, struck by every sea, was fast drawing towards the rocks under her lee; each sea grew higher as it approached the reef; and about half-past two, being lifted by one tremendous roll, she was forced upon the rocks and wrecked.

In that dreadful moment when life seems drawn to its finest thread—in that moment when all our fears are realized, when we seem to rush into the death we would so cling to avoid, how breaks the despair of man in the useless

cry for mercy! One shriek from Waters as she struck might have been heard above the loud elements, and my despairing cry echoed back my apprehensions. The first shock tore away the rudder, which, groaning at the severity of the force, took with it pentles, gudgeons, and wood-lock, bursting through the upper deck, and starting even the stern-post; the sea toppled right into the wrecked Rapid: the mainmast yielding, fell over the starboard side, and the fore-topmast snapping just above the cap, fell over to leeward.

The ship would have split in a quarter of an hour had she remained stationary; but fortunately, the following sea lifted her further on the reef, so that the first tremendous fall of the water was arrested by the outer ledge, and rendered our situation a shade less perilous; still it was evident that she would shortly go to pieces. There swung the fore-yard without a brace to steady it; the broken topmast, with the topsail-yard, was hanging over to leeward, while the ropes, which were unbelayed, or carried away, were blowing like pendants in the wind: the ship was heeled over on her starboard side, the water boiling over her larboard gunwales, while the only two human beings who witnessed this scene of destruction clung with the faint hope of existence, and cowered under the weather-bulwark. We were close together, but never spoke, excepting to animate each other as we heard the sea roaring to devour us. "Hold on! hold on!" was all we said: we were too frightened to pray; and all our hope seemed in our strong grasp of the cavil to which we clung. She struck with fearful violence, and we felt the grating of the keel when she endeavoured to settle herself as the water receded; the whole frame shook like a leaf, and the foremast bending its stay into a bight as she plunged, snapped its support as it regained its upright position, and was carried away above the board. The sea, however, lifted us again further on; again came the devouring element, and breaking upon the quarter, carried away the bulwark level with the deck; the main boom swept over to leeward, and we had not a stick left. "Come forward, Ganjam," said Waters; "bear a hand, or the next sea will have you!" We both left our position and got forward to the foremast, to the stump of which we both lashed ourselves: the yielding vessel soon began to give way; the water by this time must have washed above her lower deck;

she trembled and groaned as she grated on the rocks, and about four o'clock she split; the after part breaking into pieces, and being borne onwards, while the forecastle and that part about the chest-trees remained firm.

It is almost madness to recall to my mind the dreadful feelings which came over me when I saw all hope destroyed by the breaking up of the vessel. No boat remained to afford us the slightest prospect of escape; no land was visible to inspire us with confidence, or proffer us succour; the boiling surf whizzed over the shattered bark, and prayers seemed useless and unavailing. Those are no moments to reflect, when death is so near, and is so awful in its approach. I have seen the guilty man led to the scaffold and coolly converse with his friend; I have stood by when the medical attendant has hinted the propriety of arranging all worldly concerns; I have held the fevered maniac in my arms as death claimed him; and I have heard the last indistinct voice of the suicide, but never, oh, heavens! never did I fancy the mind of man could be so prostrated as I know my own to have been on that awful night; never could I have credited that the winds and the waves, whose howlings then resembled my funeral dirge, could have excited more emotion of fear, than when the hand of the enemy shook the cutlass over my head, and my death seemed inevitable. But no; it is in the hurry and confusion of the fight that the mind enjoys its greatest activity; it is when death is certain, that we string our nerves to meet it like men; it is when a deed is done, that we can reconcile it to ourselves; but when there is a glimpse of hope, however distant, or obscurely darted—when life *may* be preserved, although our own puny efforts are useless for such a preservation—when we rely upon others, and it is doubtful if those others heed us,—then, then it is, that he who would have stood undismayed on the scaffold, or he who could calmly listen to the denouncement of certain death to his enfeebled frame, or the man who, in the hot and riotous blood of a battle, could wash his hands in the gore of his fellow-creature—then do they become cowards; then does that timid thing, a female mind, become superior to our own; and she, who would have fainted at the sight of a spider, or shrunk from a beetle, surrenders herself up to her God with a calmness and a

nobleness worthy the example of those who call themselves the lords of the creation.

The day dawned; the wind, as is usual in tropical climates, died away, as if in awe of the sun; the sea went down a little, and we turned our eyes to examine what prospect we had of assistance. Right ahead, as we lay on the rocks, was the land: it seemed a low island, though here and there it grew higher and more distinct; it was about four miles from the reef, and was certainly inhabited. How to draw the attention of the humane to our situation became now a point of some importance, although we might have known that many there are who, after a gale, look out upon the reefs, not so much with the hope of rendering assistance, as of turning the property of the distressed to increasing their wealth.

The only spar we could lay hold of was the handspike of one of the guns forward, which had become jammed in the carriage; but we were neither of us over-anxious to cast off our lashing, for the sea swept clean over us, and, had we not used that precaution, we must have been carried off the wreck and drowned. Waters, however, taking the opportunity, and keeping the end of the rope in his hand, secured the valuable object. To this we tied our neck-handkerchiefs, and lifting the signal above the stump of the foremast, which was about six feet above-board, we succeeded in lashing it firmly, thus affording a proof that the wreck was not untenanted. But the sea broke with such violence on the shore that we hardly thought human cupidity, which is much stronger than generous exertion, could induce any one to launch his boat and risk his life against such fearful odds. As the sea went down, we became pretty secure; the part of the ship we were on no longer rose and bumped; it remained a fixture, over which the spray flew; but the outside of the reef seemed so exposed that we could entertain very slender hopes of assistance, at least for some time to come. The day was now fairly established; the sun was just peeping above the horizon, and we saw, through the spray which foamed over the reef, a boat coming off. No pen can convey the pleasurable sensations which arose, or the eager manner in which we watched the struggles of those who thus braved death to offer assistance. Waters was nearly frantic with joy, and in spite of the rolling surf, he swore that, if the

boat could not succeed in getting alongside, he would jump overboard and swim to her. In vain I opposed his rash determination; the water boiled around us, and no man could have maintained himself above it for five minutes. As we had both foreseen, when the boat neared the edge of the rocks, the wary seamen saw their inevitable destruction in endeavouring to cross the line of breakers, which broke with tremendous force on the reef, and being again disgorged from a thousand rents, caused circle within circle as the sea regained its freedom. Twice had the boat's crew endeavoured to near, and twice had they turned to the shore as if in despair; then did we implore in words which never reached their destination; then did we call aloud for pity: they were not two hundred yards from us; we stretched out our hands, we prayed, we cried, we supplicated that they would not desert us. They turned again, and again neared the rocks, when Waters, casting himself adrift, and making a signal of his determination, rushed headlong over the side, and in a moment was struggling against the tremendous sea which opposed him. At first he rose superior to the element, but when it receded he was left on his side on the sharp projecting points of the rocks; and no sooner did he endeavour to stand upright, in order to gain a little distance by a spring towards the boat, than he was swept away, turning round and round in the eddy, until that subsided, and he was again visible. I thought not on my own situation; my whole mind and soul were fixed upon the man who had twice meditated my destruction. I felt every struggle he made, and would have cheerfully faced the dangers by which he was surrounded, had I thought I could have rendered him any assistance. I saw him tossed from rock to rock; I saw how feebly a human creature could contend against the fierce force of the unrestrained ocean. I saw him dashed against the rocks, and I almost imagined I saw the blood oozing from his side; at last, when his efforts seemed gradually declining, and when strength and courage were failing, he was carried clear of the ledge, and, after whirling into deep water, was rescued by the boat's crew. I saw him hauled into the boat, and I saw through my streaming eyes that boat turn towards the shore, and after watching its diminishing form, I thought of my own forlorn and miserable state, and gave vent to a flood of tears. There was I, the last lonely victim out of the Rapid's

crew, lashed to the stump of the foremast, each sea washing over me, the wind howling in my ears, and the wreck gradually yielding to the repeated shocks; she was breaking up plank by plank; the fragments were everywhere visible, and those only hopes of my salvation were soon hurled far away to leeward. To the excitement of hope I had been indebted for the courage I had maintained; but when my eyes could no longer see the boat, and when I felt the horrid loneliness, and imagined my approaching death, all that excitement soon relaxed, and I became, from indifference to that which I thought unavoidable, nothing but a living mass, without energy, and without hope. At last, all seemed to swim around me; I remember endeavouring ineffectually to steadily fix my gaze upon a floating plank, but my brain seemed to whirl with the eddies: I then can faintly recollect a kind of vision of green fields, with now and then a glimpse of sunshine enlivening the scene; then came a general stupor, and I slept. How long it lasted I know not; but when I again opened my eyes I was in a hut surrounded by black women, who were busily rubbing me into life; and, oh! the pain of resuscitation—ten thousand times is it worse than all the agonies of suffocation; for in that moment, when the sea of eternity seems overwhelming its victim, after the first painful struggle is over, a kind of pleasing sensation steals over the drowning man, and he relinquishes life in a dream of delightful fields or variegated groves: such has ever been the description of those who, to all intents and purposes, have been drowned: the gurgling of the water, the rush into the ears, the useless pant for breath, is only momentary; the rest is a pleasure, which ends in sleep, and thus the spark is quenched.

My first inquiries were for Waters. He was alive and in bed in the next room; every care had been bestowed upon him; all that science could suggest had been tried, but the fracture he had experienced from the several severe bruises on the rocks had left him in a very precarious state; he had been delirious, and in his ravings spoke of murders, and of slaves, of pirates, of battles, but with such incoherency that those who saved him from death had as yet been unable to trace his history; to me, therefore, they turned their utmost attention, and when I with a feeble voice told my misfortunes and retraced my life, it was imagined that I was wandering, and rest and quiet were prescribed.

In a few days I was perfectly restored. I had been kept apart from Waters, for suspicion was strongly against us; but when I narrated the facts, my story was so clear, so exactly what I had told before, so minute as to dates, that it was credited. Curiosity, that strong symptom of a vigorous intellect, soon brought the more wealthy of the islanders to my assistance, and I was regarded as the most unfortunate boy alive: it was resolved to remove me as soon as I should be quite recovered, and I at last found some friends who vied with each other in protecting the unfortunate and sheltering the distressed.

Waters was fast giving way, and it was evident that he could not last long. One morning he cried out, "Show him to me, show him to me, and I shall die contented!" After many questions he answered in a kind of wild stare, "Why, Ganjam to be sure; show him to me!" I was accordingly admitted into his room. He was in bed, his face haggard and worn, his eye bright but perfectly senseless, his lips almost livid and opened, while his rough beard and uncombed locks gave the idea of a savage scared at a human figure. He stared fearfully at me, and then seemed to retrace in his memory where he had previously seen the being who stood at that moment near him. I offered him my hand; indeed, I endeavoured to take his, but he recoiled from me as if stung by an asp, and rolling himself up in the bedclothes seemed to dread the touch of one whose death he had once resolved upon. It is said that a corpse will bleed when the murderer approaches it; it has been affirmed that the maniac knows the object of his hatred, and that while his heart is seared against the being he once loved, yet that such is the inherent malignity of human nature, that his nurtured revenge can call reason back to the brain from which it had apparently been banished for ever.

"I tell you he is drowned," he said; "I saw him fall overboard when I cut the grating away;—and now I am all alone, with the wind howling and the sea roaring,—but the ship is mine, and no one knows of it! Come, come, Ganjam, the paint! the paint! quick, quick!"

I nearly fell senseless when I heard the words; they confirmed that warning voice to which I had fortunately listened, although throughout life that wonderful precursor of events

is seldom heeded until the calamity has occurred, and we remember that we might have avoided the evil.

"No, no," he continued; "I did not kill him, the pirates did it! I saw him jump overboard with his son! Hah! hah! hah! how they twirled and twirled! Hard a-starboard! hard a-starboard! we are on the rocks! God save us, boy! now for a swim!" and he began to use his legs and arms as if he were in the water, and struggling against the waves. Suddenly he stopped, and began wiping his hair, then he turned away with a shudder, and said, "He was dead before I threw him overboard!" But what signifies a black man? I have seen them starving by thousands! Give me some water! some water! 'tis seven days since the calm began!—But we can get rid of the mate, *and dead men tell no tales!*"

I rushed from the room, and threw myself on my bed; the last words had awakened a most bitter remembrance in relation to that accursed vessel, in which, from the time I had entered to the moment she had split, I had never known but one moment's satisfaction, and yet I almost fancied it pleasure to the scene now before me. He gradually grew worse and worse until the expiration of a week, when, after a lucid interval of some few minutes, during which time he confirmed all my statements, and evinced as ample repentance for the sins he had committed as the short space of returning reason allowed, and after having said that he hoped I might live to be more fortunate, he relapsed into his former aberration, and, talking of murders and slaves, endeavoured to climb up the wall, and having succeeded in getting upright, uttered a deep groan and fell back dead. The black women gave a sudden shriek, and she who had been moistening the poor man's lips with a sponge, dropped the wet substance and fell upon the floor. It was an awful sight; it left me without any former companion, a stranger on the island of Antigua: it left me without a friend; for although I had every reason to dread my companion when alive and alone with him in the Rapid, still I felt a void by that man's death, which misfortune alone could create: with him I had braved the battle, fire, and wreck! with him I had watched the cool murders of the pirates, and with him alone I had crossed the Atlantic. We buried him the next morning before sunrise, but no prayers were offered for the repose of

his soul, which, if human intercession is of any avail, were sadly wanted; no tear hallowed the ceremony, but silently was he placed to mingle with the dust whence he sprang, and to which he had returned. His life had been a life of ceaseless activity, and had his energies been directed towards more honourable pursuits, he would have died, perhaps, an ornament to society, from which he had long been an outcast. He was of that curious compound we so often meet—a man bold and fearless in the execution of crime, but, when fairly opposed, a creeping, cringing craven. In the dark, a murderer; in the light, a coward: where the glance of the human eye could not penetrate, he was desperately daring; when alone, he was fearful; and when opposed, and in the glare of day, a heartless, timid wretch.

> "So glow-worms sparkle in the night,
> But dare not stand the test of day."

Every circumstance connected with the sailing and stranding of the Rapid was listened to with avidity; accounts were transmitted to England of her wreck, and poor widow Smith heard of the loss of her husband, son, and fortune in one breath. In the mean time I was removed to the house of a planter, who possessed large estates in the island; a letter was written to my father, and it was resolved that, after I had received an answer, I should return to begin life again, as boys retreat before they jump. I had nothing to complain of in the way of unkindness; it was the first time in my life I had ever known personal freedom, and having neither captain to control, nor parent to enforce, I was as happy as a person can be who has not one farthing in the world, and who relies upon the bounties of others for his present sustenance.

Oh thou whom the world falsely calls Charity, thou art indeed a fickle divinity, and as blind as Justice ought to be! —how often do we see the swindler succeed, while the truly distressed starve! And how unlike art thou to that good "which covereth a multitude of sins!" how frequently does vanity urge thee on! how often does the unbounded praise of personal charms provoke thee to be generous! and then with what self-complacency dost thou persuade thyself that thou art the very personification of Charity herself, although,

in reality, thou art only buying the applause of the wretched, or listening to the false notes of a dissembler. It is charity indeed to do good by stealth and blush to find it fame, to take the houseless to a home, and to clothe the naked; but if the good work is trumpeted forth by him who performs it, then it ceases to be of the heavenly kind, and becomes worldly pride and feminine ostentation. If the whole world were ransacked, perhaps the really charitable would find a room eighteen feet by ten quite sufficient to hold them without embarrassing one another.

I should ill return the favours I received by classing my hospitable landlord with such opprobrium; but I cannot forget the frequent allusions he made, when he was complimented upon his generosity, and I was warned of my obligation—"that one feels obliged to do these little acts of kindness; that he never could bear to look unmoved at misfortune; and that religion was the ground-floor of his edifice." Hah! thought I, we gain experience as we rub through life. Captain Smith took me on board the Rapid merely as a favour—he made a slave of me, he made almost a murderer of me;—and now I like not this colouring of the picture; I fear the groundwork may be slippery. The time crept on, and as I was more fairly domesticated, the polish of society restored me to my former position in life; and it was credited by some, who lent a charitable ear to my tale, that I was not the imposter they had believed me to be.

At last the branch-packet from Barbadoes arrived, and brought the long-expected letters; one to my host, and the other to myself; both written by my father, and both sealed with black wax. They were written in a strain of paternal tenderness to which I had been a stranger; that to my friend and hospitable host was couched in terms of the greatest obligation, and finished by imploring him to do the last act of kindness by forwarding me as soon as possible to England. My own letter was of a far more melancholy cast: after having expressed himself gratified at finding his son alive, who had been believed dead, he described the last moments of my poor mother. It appeared that from the time of my loss she gradually pined away, though she always clung to the hope that I was alive; and finding herself sinking under the infirmities of age and maternal grief, she recommended me in the strongest manner to my father.

"Remember," she said, at nearly her last hour, "remember your son Robert; and if ever he is restored to your arms, treat him with the kindness he deserves; rely upon it he has suffered enough for all the follies of his youth." She died, it appears, as all good people do die, with a fervent hope of a happier hereafter; cheerful to the last, doing acts of kindness to her neighbours, beloved by all, and remembered by those who knew her. She was an excellent woman, a good wife, and an affectionate mother.

This was another unfortunate event, for, while she lived, I was sure of a mediator between my father and myself; but I greatly feared that when he heard that I owed all my misfortunes to my own negligence, his commiseration might turn into contempt, and that I might again be subject to all the petty vexations which had so sickened me of home. In the mean time a sufficient stock of clothes was purchased, and I was desired to be in readiness to embark when the packet was to return to England; "but," said my friend, "take my advice, never mention your misfortunes, or you will be voted a Jonas, and you will never know one moment's repose on board the ship; for sailors," said he, "are superstitious, and believe all common occurrences to proceed from some supernatural intervention. I have known," said my friend, "a cat thrown overboard for fear it should hatch sprites; and buckets of holy-water expended in sprinkling a ship's decks because a ghost had been seen stalking about her; in short, the absurdities, follies, and fancies of seamen are without bounds: and more especially will they now be on the alert for ill-luck, because you are to sail on Friday,—a day ominous to all seamen."

In the interim of departure I was cordially greeted by the gentlemen of the island, and I thought I saw, through the right end of the telescope of hope, a near approach to fortune, which the glass magnified; whereas, previously to the wreck, I had looked through the wrong end, and saw all my prospects at an immeasurable distance. I was naturally cheerful, and, in spite of all the croakings of my friends as to the unfortunate youth, I felt a presentiment that I was yet destined to be "*somebody*," The day arrived; the branch packet which was to convey me to Barbadoes already had her sails loose; every one hurried down to take leave of friends. Among the passengers there were

some who were going to spend the results of sugar plantation in England; and with about ten other happy people, all men, some of whom had a sprinkling of gray hairs prematurely plentiful; others, who seemed not much to heed the "kerchiefs decked in heavenly green," with which the numerous Miss Lucys kept waving; and one brown man, who kept his eye with a vacant stare upon the place of his birth, where many a happy day had been passed even in slavery, until the liberality of the master, without the assistance of Mr. Stanley's bill, had rendered him miserable by making him free. He now no longer found a home provided for him, his small patch of ground to be his own profit; he no longer heard the simple music to which he had often skipped and danced when the toil of the day was over, and the evening of repose followed the morn of employment; but with a heavy vacancy he gazed upon that spot on which he had passed many a happy hour, and almost sighed to be restored to his cottage, his cocoa-grounds, and his merry companions. But he was proud of being free; and his freedom led him to another island, where his former slavery had been unknown.

The anchor was aweigh, the sails spread, the breeze fresh, the last adieu had reached the shore, when we all turned to the bright prospects of the future: from the fulness of hope, some experienced a trifling reverse in the penalties exacted by Neptune from interlopers on the sea; some got sick, some sorry, some sad: the crew, as usual, thought only on their occupations and their messes; and without any accident, for a wonder, "the most unfortunate man in the world" arrived at Barbadoes.

The packet into which I transferred myself was the Skylark, commanded by Captain McDonald, a gentleman who spoke rather broadly his vernacular tongue, and who joined to that damning proof of his country, the sometimes distinguishing mark of trifling venality. We had on board altogether fourteen passengers, and we started on the 3d of May, 1810, the trade-wind blowing as usual, and were soon out of sight of the low hot island, which the inhabitants call "Little England."

CHAPTER XI.

"I shall not take upon me," said Dr. Johnson, "to decide if ghosts have walked upon the earth, but *appearances* are much in favour of such an idea."

GANJAM's house was turned into an abode of misery. In vain, of course, was every search to discover the lost boy. In vain was London rummaged, the walls pasted with notices, advertisements paid for and published; day after day passed on, no intelligence was received; the uncertainty of the existence even of her son, drove Mrs. Ganjam into a melancholy mood, which at last terminated her life, and left the whole care of the establishment upon Jane. Mr. Ganjam never took the least trouble with the interior arrangements of his house; he considered it quite work enough for any man to sign checks when they were wanted; and even then would rail out against the innocent intruder upon his studies. Banana's agent at Java had been rather slack in his remittances, and, as Banana remembered the old expression, "The eye of the master fattens the horse," he immediately packed up; and a month from the reception of his agent's letter he was embarked on board the Surabaya, a Dutch ship under English colours, and sailed. He reached his destination quite safe and sound, and began to amass wealth by his steady and cool calculations. But, before he went, he was destined to experience some of those many little misfortunes which he treasured up into a kind of heap, which after he had related one by one, he would generally end with a remark such as this: "Now, look at these accumulations," he would say—"some poet says, 'Small sands the mountain, minutes make the year, and trifles life;' so these little and little grievances ultimately become one very great and serious mischief."

His ideas of right and wrong were rather confused. One day, the Sabbath, he went to a coach-office, and having seen his portmanteau safely lodged in the fore-boot, as was his invariable practice, betook himself to the office to pay his

fare before he started. The man *in office*, leaning over the counter, with a most affable lisp said, "Seventeen shillings, sir, if you please."

"Seventeen shillings, sir?" said Banana, who was always ready to believe every man inclined to cheat him: "why, sir, I went down yesterday fortnight by the same coach, and I only paid sixteen shillings. Look back at your book, sir; look back; I know what I ought to pay, and I shall pay no more. My name is Benjamin Banana; look back at your book, sir."

"Sir," said the dandy clerk, "to-day is Sunday, and we always charge one shilling more on that day."

"What for?" said Banana.

"Because, sir," resumed the clerk, "it being Sunday, the—"

"Good heavens!" interrupted Banana, "pay a shilling because it's Sunday; here is an imposition! Give me my portmanteau; where are my cloak and umbrella? I would rather walk than be so egregiously cheated. A shilling because it's Sunday! Here, porter, take these things and follow me. A shilling for every Sunday in the year! fifty-two days set apart to practise villany while others are at prayers! and even there too it's practised, for one pays a shilling for a seat to hear a man talk! Porter, go on before, and don't walk fast."

"Where am I to go, sir?" said the rough-looking fellow.

"Anywhere where I can get a post-chaise. Sir, walk faster; there, that will do; don't be running away at such an infernal rate!"

It happened that one or two of those good, kind-hearted souls, who are so very fond of relieving others from burdens in London, were this day on the look-out to be serviceable; and, having seen how close Banana kept to his portmanteau, they instantly devised a plan to save him the trouble of watching so valuable an article. Seeing the way he was going, two out of the four went on in advance, and placed themselves behind a corner, round which they knew Banana and his porter must pass. The porter walked on, clearing the way for his employer, and rather increasing than slackening his pace, when, as he turned the corner, smack came a stout man against him, down fell the portmanteau, cloak, and umbrella, and evident signs of hostilities were displayed

both by the aggressor and the sufferer. The porter, relying on his corporeal capabilities, squared out, notwithstanding it was Sunday, and the innocent gentleman, who pretended to be highly incensed, forgot all the meekness and mildness which had been recommended him in the morning, and forthwith prepared to fight it out. In the mean time, Banana, who was very anxious to get to his place of destination, endeavoured to seize his portmanteau, when one of the gang offered most willingly to carry it. The scuffle had begun to the evident discomfiture of the porter, who got kicked and cuffed by the whole gang; and when Banana endeavoured to follow his valuables, he was hustled by all hands, and ultimately just caught a glimpse of the tails of his new friend's coat as he twirled round the corner and made off. Banana, extricating himself from the crowd, ran after his portmanteau, but when he turned the corner, the chase, as a sailor would say, was no longer in sight. "Pray, sir," said he to the first man he met, "did you see a man carrying a portmanteau pass you?"

"Yes, sir," said the man, "he turned down that lane."

Away went Banana, and fortunately saw the ill-begotten knave stealing off at a good pace. "Stop thief! stop thief!" roared Banana; a chase was established; all the boys in the town were at his heels, hooting and hallooing; the dogs joined in the hue and cry, and Sunday never saw a more extraordinary hunt within the bills of mortality. In the mean time the accomplices were by no means inactive; they managed to get in advance, and by crossing the leading man endeavoured to embarrass more than assist. But still, as the good-natured gentleman who was pursued carried weight, he was fast losing the advantage he had gained at the start; and, finding that he must ultimately be caught if he did not unburden himself, he dropped first the coat, then the umbrella, in the same way and under the same idea as mentioned in a book on India, where a traveller was pursued by a tiger, and finding the voracious monster decrease his distance at every bound, he threw off his coat, which was instantly seized by the animal; this slight detention, followed up by giving his hat, afforded time to gain a shelter and security. This plan, however, was not quite so successful, for it so happened that the dogs, men, and boys, were so close to the runaway when he quitted the portman-

teau, that the neighbourhood were alarmed before the object was clear of it; so that, when a stout man saw the last act of abandonment in the thief, he jumped forward, and seizing the panting villain, held him as if in a vice. The property was rescued; an officer had already seized his victim, when Banana, breathless with the long run, and nearly dead beat with exertion, came up with the mob and claimed his portmanteau, it having taken him about five minutes to get out as many words. He stuttered and stammered, and cursed and swore in a most unchristian-like manner, while all the boys stood tittering and laughing at his droll appearance. One thing he managed to do, which was to give the man in charge of the officer, and to promise to appear the next morning before the lord-mayor: little dreaming of the precious cobweb into which he was thrusting his wings; and little knowing the number of spiders and bloodsuckers who are always ready to pounce upon the unwary, and hold him as fast as the meshes of the law will admit of. The culprit was walked off, and Banana, after much toil and trouble, and having got a *boy* to carry his portmanteau, ultimately arrived safe and sound at the Swan with Two Necks in Ladlane. He was in no very enviable mood of mind, and was for some time believed by the waiters to be insane; but that soon gave way to hunger, and when he set himself down to dinner he recovered his spirits enough to inflict the story of his misfortunes, with some small additions, on the attendants.

Banana's time in England was very short. Indeed, he had made up his mind to go to Portsmouth the next day, and therefore was by no means the better pleased when he was informed that this attempt of purloining might entangle him in a prosecution. But as it had been a maxim with our unfortunate hero, that "all chambermaids were born fools," and "all waiters rascals," he concluded his authority for the supposed detention had some sinister view as to securing his stay, and therefore, giving one of those very knowing and intelligible looks which we can all put on when requisite, he asked for his bed-candle, and, preceded by a very smartly-dressed maid, followed to his reposing spot, and prepared for bed. However, before he commenced operations, he thought it right and proper to say something civil to the fair lady who had kindly consented to be his guide; and thus Banana, after having hemmed three times,

and pumped up a deep sigh from the inner vesicle of his heart, began: at the same moment running his fingers through his front hair, and then elevating a little his shirt-collar, to give an elegant finish to an elegant figure.

"Have you been long in this house, my pretty maid?" said my uncle.

"About a year," was the reply.

"You must have plenty to do in this inn; for it appears to me that coaches are driving in and out of the yard every two minutes, and I suppose the travellers always require something."

"Indeed they do," replied the chattering creature. "And one might as well be a negro, for the people who put up here think we are bound to be slaves for nothing. But I'm going to better myself in a short time, and I have given warning to-day."

"What's the use of giving warning until you have secured a better place?" asked my uncle.

"As for that," replied the abigail, "I'll answer for it, I shan't want."

"No, my dear," said my uncle; "a girl of your beauty can never want, while men live."

"Oh dear, sir," she replied, blushing a little, "you are so kind as to say so."

"Why, I assure you, my dear creature, I think so," said my uncle, putting his hand on her back, at the same time gently patting her, and looking with swimming eyes full on her face. "You really are pretty, very pretty, my little dear. Are you married?"

"Lord, no, sir!" said the girl. "Married and Amen, they say. I wonder who would marry a chambermaid from the Swan with Two Necks, Lad-lane?"

"Why, that's not a bad name of a place either for a chambermaid," said my uncle, chuckling and giggling as he thought he had said something mighty witty.

"Good-night, sir," said the maid, she having seen the kindling fire of his eye. "I must go, sir, or mistress will find me here, sir. Good-night, sir."

"Stop, stop, Mary," said my uncle. "Do you sleep alone, or does the other maid sleep with you?"

"No, sir, as it happens, I have a room to myself now.

The other maid left her situation this morning, and the new one does not come until to-morrow."

"And what's the number of your room, my dear?"

"I can't think why you want to know, sir. You gentlemen are so curious like; but if you must be informed, I tell you, my room is No. 84, just over yours."

"Are you afraid of ghosts, Mary?"

"Oh, dear me, I should never sleep if I were; but I don't care much about them, for I never saw a real one in my life. However, I hope no ghost will come."

"Mary, Mary, where are you?" said a sharp shrill voice at this period of the conversation. "Where are you, Mary?"

"Coming, ma'am, coming." And away flew the abigail.

It is often, very often, in these slight trivial conversations, that the foundation of the most unfortunate events is laid. From trifling circumstances what great events occur! How often do we in an unguarded moment thus begin to render our fellow-creatures irretrievably miserable; and then, lost in the giddy whirlpool of enjoyment, we forget the many wretched hours we have condemned another to experience; and while we are crammed to suffocation with the good things of this life, our victims are shivering in want of shelter, or imploring the humane to alleviate their sufferings.

"Let any man," says Dr. Johnson, "see the thousands of miserable wretches who throng the streets of the metropolis, and let him judge of the enormity of the crime by the mischief it produces."

The time arrived; it was one o'clock, the house was still, not a creature was moving, save that now and then a slight noise was heard overhead. Banana with the utmost care crept from his warm abode, and, opening his door, began to grope his way to the staircase. Ever and anon, the cursed floor cracked as he trod upon it. Then came all the apprehension of discovery: he felt a fear creep over him lest some cursed mishap should occur to render him ridiculous.

He got hold of the bannisters. Step by step he ascended; and when one creaked he kept close to the wall-side, in order to prevent that tell-tale noise from occurring again, until after a shiver of about a quarter of an hour he arrived exactly in face of No. 84. The moon happened to shine through a kind of skylight window, and her rays fell exactly

upon the figures. There could be no mistake. It was, as he calculated, exactly over his room, and the description corresponded with the abigail's information.

He tried the door without turning the handle. It was shut, and not ajar as he had expected to find it. He turned the handle; it was unlocked. It gave no warning of the intruder; it turned upon its hinges as silently as a baby in its sleep. It stood open.

The window in front betrayed the situation of the bed, and after closing the door, Banana with cautious footsteps succeeded in reaching its side unobserved by the occupant, he standing exactly between the window and the object of his search.

Our adventurer paused a little, for she slept, and sleep is always a kind of warranty of innocence, at least when it is undisturbed by starts, or when the visions of the day have ceased to act upon the brain, and the slumberer does not speak; for if she does but speak, we learn what the tongue of prudence is cautious not to betray.

"Why does prince Azo start?" He heard of the infidelity of his wife from her own unconscious lips.

Banana was very much like the statue of Patience on the Monument: for he was just as cold, and just as fixed; he knew not what to do. At first he thought of gently touching the fascinating Mary, but he was afraid of some involuntary sigh escaping from her lips; and chambermaids' sighs are very much like delicate females' squalls. At last, the constant shivering and shaking which he experienced roused his determination, and he gently withdrew the curtain.

Our hero was by no means a light gay shadow of a man. He was a stout, well-built, heavy article, rather verging on the clumsy, than making pretensions to the active.

No sooner, however, had Banana, who was the most delicate, sensitive man alive, accidentally touched his new companion, than the form, no longer a fairy form, turned suddenly round, and, uttering a volley of most intelligible curses, seized Banana by his only garment. Away jumped our unfortunate man, ejaculating merely, "Good God!" a sentence short, it is true, but quite indicative of surprise and alarm.

"You most infernal thief, you!" roared the hero of the bed, who was a long, lanky, muscular man. "D—n you!

I have got you at last, in the very act of stealing my watch; and, by the Lord, you may struggle and wriggle as much as you please, but I'll give you some credit if you twist yourself out of my grasp."

"I assure you, sir," said Banana, endeavouring all in his power to tear himself away from his antagonist, who was by slow degrees getting out of bed; "I assure you, sir, it is all a mistake. I have mistaken the room. I am no thief."

"Oh, but, my friend," replied the other, "we'll see that when we get the light. Holloa, Murphy, my boy," said he to a friend in the next room; "just step here for a moment; I've got a customer in my man-trap; maybe the very gentleman who made a mistake in your room the other night, and just by accident walked off with your purse."

"Hold on the villain murderer," said Murphy, in broad Irish. "Hold him on, and I'll be with you before you can say pase;' by the holy poker, but we'll try him and execute him on the spot. I'm all for proper justice, in the court-martial manner."

"I beg, sir," said Banana, assuming as much dignity as a man in his garb could command, "I beg you to unhand me. I do assure you, sir, I have made a mistake, and that I can explain very satisfactorily how this accident has occurred."

"Well well, sir," said the stranger. "We will hear you when we see you a little better; but, by the Lord, I think you were as near cutting out my watch as needs be, and then making sail with the prize. We don't make mistakes often, and sail into an enemy's harbour, and then beg pardon for the intrusion."

The reader, by this last speech, will be perfectly aware that the blockader was a sailor; for, strange as it may appear, although a seaman may in cool parlance disguise his calling, yet, when once excited, he is sure to thunder out the language in which he is most accustomed to converse. Sailors, of all men in the world, are generally least on their guard. They speak right out, and very seldom take the trouble of endeavouring to sail under false colours.

"Bear a hand, Murphy, with the glim, for it's cursed cold here just now, and the gentleman who makes mistakes is shivering very suspiciously."

"Aisy, my boy, aisy," replied Murphy. "We shall have

lots of officers to try the thief in a moment, for I have roused out the master of the inn, and he is striking a light, and will be with you in a moment. We shall only want two more to form a court, and the court must prosecute. Have you a decent shovel in your room? because, you see, we'll execute judgment directly the sentence is pronounced."

These words came not over the ear like breezes from the sweet south over a bank of violets, stealing and giving odours, but they gave courage by picturing despair. Banana felt that his name would be blighted for ever if he were tried by five strangers, he standing with no other covering but what Joseph is represented to have worn; and he felt that, however innocent he was of the suspicion, he was guilty in the eye of the master of the house, if he told the truth, and that all the goat in the sheep-skin of modesty would be discovered; he resolved, therefore, to make one desperate effort to escape, before the fierce Murphy, backed by the master of the inn, and followed by two more, should make their appearance; and so, screwing up his muscles for the attempt, he made a sudden bound, and extricated himself from the grasp of the sailor, springing at the same moment towards the door. The young hero of the ocean was soon in chase, and succeeded in placing himself as a barrier against all attempts at escape, by posting himself, like a Sampson's post, against the harbour-bar, as he called the door; and fixing his hand in the collar of Banana's shirt, he merely said,

"Just, my lad, try that trick again, and bad luck to me if I don't fire such a broadside into your bread-room as will puzzle you to plug the shot-hole up."

Murphy, hearing the scuffle, came out into the passage armed with a poker; and a second afterwards, the master of the Swan with Two Necks appeared in a bed-gown, with a light, which cast a ray upon the face of his wife on one side, and of the treacherous Mary on the other. The whole house was alarmed, and our unfortunate man, beyond all doubt, about to be discovered. Murphy preceded the landlord, and in a minute the culprit was brought to light, and the investigation began.

"Now," said Murphy, locking the door, and taking out the key, "we will relieve you, master-at-arms, from your charge, and allow the prisoner to go at large, while we arrange the court; for, by the piper, he shall have justice and a counsel to

defend him. I hate injustice, or any partial proceedings; and all the service know that, whenever I have hung a man or two, the poor fellows always had a fair trial for it. So now," said he, as he placed a table in the middle of the room, and lighted three other candles, "now we will throw a little light upon the subject, and bring ourselves to an anchor, according to custom. Let us do the business properly and systematically, and get some brandy-and-water for the prisoner, in case he should require it, to keep his spirits up."

The master of the house was off in a moment for the spirits, and on his return, the court proceeded according to due forms, the key being placed on the table; Banana having taken the quilt off the bed, and having rolled himself up in order to defy cold, and cover his face and limbs from indecent observation.

Mr. John Cox, the master of the house, wished to know to whose account the bottle of brandy should be charged. It was resolved unanimously that the prisoner should pay that as a fee of court, therein following the shameful imposition on the public of making sinecure places in order to increase the charges upon justice. Thus we hear of registers of courts, and such like shameful and scandalous places; and thus, until the late decision of Mr. Baron Bayley, a man was obliged to declare to an action by attorney; so that the business of getting justice was a business of vexatious plunder and petty larceny. Before long, thank God, we shall do away with some of these villanous impositions, and cut down some barriers upon justice, upheld to remunerate the sons of those who have been perhaps ornaments to their profession, and who have been rewarded by peerages and pensions, the which have been handed down as burdens upon those who are forced into the courts to defend their property.

"Is the court sworn?" said Murphy.

"No," replied Mr. John Cox, who was one of the dryest specimens of human nature, and who never agreed with any one, or was ever satisfied with the works of others.

Murphy desired his friend to take the chair, which was accordingly done, when three glasses of brandy-and-water being mixed, the president rose, and holding his glass of mahogany at a right line from his mouth, said aloud, the other members repeating after him according to their different names,

"I, John Mizen, do swear that I will, in the case now before the court, give impartial justice to the best of my power and belief, so help *me grog!*" upon which the glass was drained.

"John Mizen!" said poor Banana to himself; "the very gallant officer who is so very fond of my pretty niece."

"I, John Cox—I, Patrick Murphy, do swear—do swear, that I will—that I will, in the case now before the court—in the case now before the court, give impartial justice to the best of my power and belief—give impartial justice to the best of my power and belief, so help me grog!—so help me grog!" And down went the contents of two as respectable glasses of the said liquor, as ever passed the lips of soldier or sailor, master or marine. "Hah!" went John Cox, endeavouring to gain his breath, in order to take objection to the proceedings, inasmuch as they had sworn the court before the order was read and the names called.

The objection was overruled by the president, who, after mixing another glass, asked if the court could legally be constituted, only three being present, whereas, five was the lowest number mentioned in the act of parliament called "The Mutiny Act."

Captain Murphy thought it a matter of the slightest indifference if a man were hanged on the opinion of three or five persons, as the three would at any rate overrule the other two, and, therefore, if they agreed, it was useless having the whole five; it being a rule in court, made absolute in the trial of that murdered man Admiral Byng, that to whatever the majority decree, the rest must sign their names: "so that," said Murphy, "I think we can do much better with three, and we shall have the more brandy to ourselves."

John Cox, who entered into the merriment of the party, and who had in his time been master of a sloop-of-war, and turned innkeeper, after having married the only daughter of the late respected Matthew Juniper, who succeeded to the business, understood the forms of court, and likewise the method of keeping the day's reckoning, either on sea or shore, and who knew all about half-elapsed time and expenditure in the spirit-room, &c.—John Cox, I say, objected to this violation of the act, having before his eyes the prospect of another two hundred per cent. in the event of the five

being called; and after a long argument, finished by saying, that, "if the prisoner in the blanket should be condemned, which, in his opinion, was certain, he should, if he were the prisoner, move for an arrest of judgment, on the plea that the court was not legally formed." All objection was overruled by the president, and the court proceeded.

"Sergeant-at-arms," said the president, "produce the prisoner."

Patrick Murphy immediately stepped forward, and, taking Banana round the waist, carried him to the foot of the table, and placed the unfortunate man in full-front of the president. There stood that pattern of morality and stickler for decency; there stood Mr. Benjamin Banana, ashamed to look up and show his face to Mizen, for fear of detection, and dreading, if he did not, the certain punishment which would be inflicted.

"Prisoner," said the president, "you stand before this court on a charge of having, in the dead of night, entered by stealth into the room of one John Mizen, with the intent to rob the said John Mizen, you being taken in the very act."

The president was then sworn on the poker to give evidence. John Cox objected to swearing the president, as it was impossible that justice could be done if the president were prosecutor, judge, and witness: a kind of objection which certainly does appear what a sailor calls a "*pauller*," and which, to be sure, has been overruled once or twice in courts-martial.

"I hold," said Patrick Murphy, captain of H.M.S. Badger, "that Mr. John Cox is, as usual, quite wrong in all his objections. McArthur is clear on the point, that the prosecutor may be sworn and give evidence,—nay, that any member of the court may be sworn. Now, Mr. President, it is evident, that if the court is the prosecutor, you, who represent the court, may be sworn; and if you are of the same opinion about yourself, we overrule John Cox, and you are hereby sworn accordingly."

"I do overrule the objection," said Mizen, "and hereby swear myself on the poker, to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me grog!" and the glass was victimized. John Mizen here deposed, "That at his usual time he turned into bed, and that he was suddenly awakened by feeling a man's hand endeavouring to take the watch from under his pillow; that the said person had

actually got upon his bed, in order, in his firm belief, that he might have strangled him, had he hesitated, on awakening; but that, as the prisoner touched him, he was, as all sailors are, instantly aroused, and forthwith seizing the culprit, called to Murphy to assist him in securing the prisoner; that he, Mizen, was sure and certain that the prisoner was the man."

In his cross-examination by John Cox, he said, "That he was not certain that the prisoner's hand was under the pillow; he imagined his intention must have been to purloin his watch, or to rob him: he had no reason to believe the prisoner had any animosity against him, or he against the prisoner, being sure that he had never seen him before; he was willing to discredit his own senses, if the prisoner could establish that he ever was in his presence previously to this night."

Here Banana, who kept his head doubled down like a savage in a squall, merely raised it sufficiently to eye Mizen, and then resumed his bent position.

"Call Patrick Murphy," said the president, as he took his chair.

Murphy deposed, "That he was awakened by John Mizen, who called upon him to assist him in securing the prisoner, and that he forthwith awoke John Cox, in order to procure a light; that he has no animosity against the prisoner."

Here John Cox objected to the evidence, inasmuch as the witness had never been sworn; and he questioned much if it was not now too late to do so.

"By no means," said Mizen; and the witness being sworn upon the poker, drank his grog, when he called upon the *spirit* to attest the truth of his assertion.

"Call John Cox," said the president.

John Cox being duly sworn, corroborated the greater part of the preceding witness's deposition, and sitting down, the case of the prosecution closed. Banana was told that if he had any thing to say in his defence, now was his time.

John Cox objected to this, inasmuch as he was by no means certain that, although the prosecutor could be called as evidence, the whole court could be examined; he believed it to be without precedent, and objected to the whole

proceeding, as he was convinced that it was illegal and improper.

"By no means," said Mizen; "Lord Erskine himself said that courts-martial differed from all other modes of administering justice, inasmuch as the court were prisoners, the witnesses were judges, and the prisoners were at large. And, d—n it, Cox, the bottle is empty, and we cannot proceed without freshening hawse."

Cox took the key, opened the door, locked it on the outside, descended, ascended, and produced the requisite restorer, or balm for consciences.

"We will now proceed," said the president, "as the prosecution is closed."

"I beg leave," said Cox, "to clear the court, as I have an objection to make."

"The court is cleared," said Mizen.

"The act requires," said Cox, "that no member shall leave the ship until sentence is pronounced; now I have been for the brandy, and I have doubts—"

"Oh! to the devil with your doubts," said Murphy; "you have only been below; you have not been out of the ship: the whole thing is mighty correct: so plase the pigs, let us proceed to punishment as quickly as possible, and save the poor fellow's feelings, who will be mightily annoyed at our keeping him so long in suspense."

"I object to that," said John Cox; "the prisoner has not made his defence."

"That is true," replied Mizen, "but as he can have nothing to say, I think with Murphy, we might relieve him by proceeding to sentence; besides, like other courts, we have all made up our minds before; and the number of lashes is alone the consideration."

"Gentlemen," said Banana, "this may be all very amusing to you, but I warn you that the first man who touches me shall answer for it with his life. I tell you that the whole has originated in a mistake, and I call upon you, if you have any doubts as to my statement, to call an officer, to desist from this satire on an honourable court, and to allow me to retire to my own room."

"Contempt of court, by the poker!" said Murphy; "I hope, Mr. President, you will consider this in the sentence."

"I object to that," said Cox, "he can only be sentenced upon the charge; and, now I think of it, that charge has no reference to any article of war."

"Poh! poh! gentlemen!" said Banana, "this is now no longer a joke. I insist upon speaking one word with Mr. Mizen in the corner, and no doubt we shall all be friends in a moment, and finish this folly and go to bed."

"I object to that," said Cox; "it is positively against the act for any one of the court to hold any private communication with the prisoner."

Here however his objection was overruled again, for Mizen immediately jumped up, and Banana whispered something in his ear.

Mizen turned round, took the light, held it close to Banana's face, and then making allowances for dress and cosmetics, recognised the uncle of Jane; he immediately shook him by the hand, and dismissed the court, notwithstanding an objection from Cox, who managed to steer out of the room with some difficulty.

"Upon my honour, Mr. Mizen," said Banana, "a very pretty satire upon naval courts-martial. I dare say you would have put on your nightcaps and condemned me, although you had made up your minds previously. Good-night, sir," said he to Murphy, who was quite astounded at the sudden change; "we shall meet to-morrow at breakfast, when I shall be able to give you a better opportunity, I hope, of dealing out even-handed justice, in another case of mine. Mizen, keep the secret; good-night!" And forthwith the shivering culprit betook himself to bed, enveloped in the folds of Mizen's quilt. Banana had just reached his door, when hearing a slight rustle, he turned round and saw Mary: he was on the point of assisting her to the infernal regions by some bitter curse, when he recollected the sham-poh affair; whereupon he bridled his rage, just catching the following comfortable consolation from Mary—

"Why, what business had you there? I told you 84, and you got into 87."

It was a pretty reflection for Banana when he got snug into his own bed again. How bitterly did he condemn fortune for his own follies! could such a cursed accident have occurred to any one else? or was he the only being to

be thus rendered miserable by a common occurrence in every man's life? But some men are never fortunate, and never succeed: they have all the nerve for great actions; they have all the talent requisite to lead, or to repel; yet they want that tide of good fortune which was denied to a Moore, and which flowed for a Nelson. It is an old saying and a true one, "It is better to be born lucky than rich," and very sincerely did our friend Banana subscribe to that which ages have believed. And thus pondering over the various events of the day and night, he gradually grew confused in his objects; his senses were drowning in oblivion, and before daylight he was asleep, and for once fortunate.

When Banana was dressed, which he always did in a tidy manner, as the coachmen say, he for a long time hesitated if he should descend below. John Cox, who objected to every thing, objected also to keep a secret: and Mary had, no doubt, told a tale of her own invention relative to the curious gentleman in 52: indeed, another unfortunate event occurred during the time he dawdled about his room, undergoing the infliction of shaving, &c.

Banana, it is to be observed, had brought from India with him a Javanese dress, which from the ease with which it was put on and taken off, and likewise from the warmth it afforded in winter, and coolness in summer, he always used as a dressing-gown: on the top of this dress he generally in cold weather added a turban, which gave his brown face the very air and bearing of a Javanese. Nothing annoyed the hero of our tale more than being hurried during his ablutions; and frequently would he walk up and down in his room, look out of the window, turn over a book, then shave, then walk again, thus killing a considerable quantity of time. It happened that this unfortunate morning, as Banana was looking out of his window, he espied a very comely-looking lass on the other side of the miserable street, and she seeing a figure with which she was by no means familiar, kept looking and looking, in order, if possible, to make out what manner of man was standing at the window. We all remember the story of the gentleman who made a bet "that he would collect a crowd, and that none should know why such crowd was collected." Englishmen are regular *gazers*, as our transatlantic friends term "idle wonderers," and shortly one came and another came, all looking at

Banana's window; the curiosity being enhanced from the casual observation of our hero, who having seen the collecting mass, had withdrawn himself from the window, and yet kept occasionally peeping and wondering what the matter could be to attract such a host of people, who might have been much better employed. Poor fellow! it never occurred to him that he was the show; he never thought of the singularity of his appearance, and believing that something mighty strange was going on near his window, he more than once endeavoured to discover the reason, thus giving the mob a good opportunity of seeing him.

In all probability, poor Banana would have escaped any further notice, had not a man in the crowd, who was a wag, and who saw the embarrassment of the mob to account for the appearance of so droll a person, remarked to his companion, quite loud enough to be overheard by the whole mass, "That the stranger was Chang Ling Fling Fou, the Chinese minister, who was sent over to invite the Chairman of the East India Company to repair to the Celestial Presence for a fortnight; and that he supposed, according to the custom of the Chinese, the minister would shortly mount to the house-top to say his prayers."

This was quite enough to wind up John Bull to the highest pitch of curiosity, and the numbers increased to a great extent, when Mr. John Cox came out of his front-door and exclaimed:

"Gentlemen, I object to this assembly. It is quite illegal, and very detrimental to honest men who wish to proceed quietly in their vocations."

He was, however, interrupted by loud shouts, followed up by, "When does he say his prayers? Does he get on the chimney-top?" and such like unintelligible questions, when some one called out: "There, there he is again."

John Cox ran over to see what was there, and instantly recognised the prisoner. He bounded into his house; was up-stairs in a moment, and, after rapping at Banana's door, he entered, and forthwith began—

"Sir, I object to the manner in which you collect mobs opposite my door."

"Pray, sir," said Banana, "listen to me. I object to your tapping at my door before you come in, as if, indeed,

you imagined I was employed about that which required caution or secrecy."

"Sir," said Mr. John Cox, "I object to any such suspicion; but I must beg you not to stand at the window in that queer dress. The mob take you for a Chinese."

"A Javanese, Mr. Cox, if you please. No island in the world like that, Mr. Cox. Oh, if I had only my Pantong, my Sedan, or my servant who used to sham—"

Here he stopped short, leaving Cox to finish the sentence, for the landlord knew what sham-pooing was as well as Banana.

"But, sir, the mob, I say, are assembled to look at you, and want to know when you intend to ride the chimney-top, in order to say your prayers."

Banana thought Cox mad, and Cox was just sane enough to return the compliment.

"Looking at me, are they?" said Banana. "Then they won't see me any more, I promise you. But really this is a very queer country, where a man is hunted because he wears a turban."

The conversation was interrupted by a waiter, who came into the room at the very nick of time when Banana was showing Cox how easily a man could dress and undress in Java. The intrusion was excessively annoying, and Banana, in a violent fit of anger, asked how any man dare enter his room without first rapping at the door.

"I came," said the waiter, "to inform you that Captain Murphy and Mr. Mizen are waiting breakfast for you, sir."

"Well, sir," said Banana, "and why did not you knock before you came in?"

"Because," said the waiter, "it is not my custom so to do."

"You are, sir, a most insolent scoundrel for the observation," said Banana.

"Who do you call a scoundrel!" reiterated the infuriated knight of the plate and knife. "I'd have you to know, sir, that a gentleman in this country does not put up with any such abuse from either Jew, Christian, or Turk, much more from one who is a mixture of either."

"I object to all this," said Cox. "Really, sir, I object to this; for you found fault with me because I did knock at your door, and what am I to do the next time?"

"Leave my room now, at any rate," said Banana. And out they went, the waiter taking the precaution to tell the mob that the Chinese minister was going out in the European costume on a visit to the lord-mayor.

Many were the jokes at breakfast at the expense of Banana; and he would have laughed at his own misfortunes as well as either of the party, had not he fortunately looked at his watch, and found his time rather short for his appearance at the Mansion House; and our curious friend having told his companions of the disasters of the day before, they resolved, as Murphy expressed it, "to see him through it."

Accordingly they made preparations to start, and the mob made preparations to prevent it. Banana brushed his hat most carefully, and having taken especial care that he was without a speck of dirt, took the arm of both friends, and made a desperate sortie. No sooner, however, had he gained the streets, than an immense hue-and-cry was raised by the mob.

"That's him, in the middle; that's him. Why he does look like a Turk, sure enough, although he has borrowed the toggery of that Englishman."

This was, as Banana termed it, excessively annoying, more especially as the crowd did him the honour to walk some before and some after him; those in front turning round to look, and those behind pressing forward to gain a view. The nuisance was intolerable; and was ultimately saved by Mizen, who, calling a hackney-coach, popped the Chinese minister therein, notwithstanding his reluctance to get into such a vehicle.

The case was called on before the lord-mayor, who was a jesting kind of judge, "full of wise saws and modern instances," and was thus reported by that oracle of police reports the Morning Herald, a paper which, like the lord-mayor, bent neither to one side nor the other.

"*Police.—Mansion-house.*—Yesterday John Snob was brought before the lord-mayor, charged with having endeavoured to purloin the portmanteau, great-coat, and umbrella of one Benjamin Banana, Esq., a gentleman who has resided some time in the East Indies, and who, from his spruce appearance and extraordinary manner, excited the attention of a crowd of the great unwashed. It was stated by Mr. Banana that the porter who conveyed his trunk, &c.

from the coach-office, got embroiled with some gentlemen in the street, and put down his load, in order to fight it out with one who had affronted him; that during the fight, the prisoner at the bar took hold of the luggage and made off with it; that Banana followed as close as possible, and ultimately succeeded in overtaking the prisoner, who had, finding himself pursued, dropped the luggage by degrees, until at last he dropped the portmanteau; but in consequence of the cry of 'stop thief,' he was arrested by a stout man, and ultimately given in charge of the constable," &c. &c.

The prisoner said he "was only doing what the gentleman asked him to do; that he had no wish whatever to purloin the portmanteau, but, on the contrary, thought he was doing a service; but that was always the way with gentlemen who wished to be rid of those who had been serviceable."

The case was clear enough, and Banana was bound over to prosecute. In vain he talked of leaving the country; this made the lord-mayor more positive as to the obligation of heightening the recognisances, at which Banana lost his little temper, aud began to rail against such justice, which forced a man to remain in a country against his will for such a vagabond as the one at the bar.

"I don't think, Mr. Banana," said the lord-mayor, "that you treat either myself or your friend at the bar with any great proportion of gratitude. I am endeavouring to accommodate your friend with lodgings for nothing, in order that you may know where to find him."

"But, my lord," said Banana, "I never want to find him again. I most certainly shall not prosecute any such vagabond."

The prisoner was removed from the bar; and Banana left the court, muttering, after having been bound over to prosecute, "If justice were thus dealt out in Batavia, we should soon have a revolution."

Poor Banana had scarcely got clear of the court, when a vagabond cried out: "That's him, that's the Chinese minister!" which compelled our hero once more to take refuge in a hackney-coach; and in order to avoid any further importunities, he took his place for Portsmouth, and left the recognisances to go to the devil. After dining with Mizen and

Murphy, he got clear of a town in which he had experienced such vexations, and shortly after sailed for Java. And there we shall leave him until he completes his fifty-second year, at which period he returned to England, in the year of our Lord 1830.

CHAPTER XII.

> Oh, Love! thou art the very god of evil;
> For, after all, I cannot call you—devil.
>
> *Don Juan.*

Mizen daily called at Ganjam's house in order to make inquiries concerning the health of the inmates, and was shortly admitted to offer his condolence to Miss Jane on the loss of her mother.

I do not know any visit so very disagreeable as the one alluded to, especially for a sailor; for they, owing to their wandering lives, are scarcely ever so much out of luck as to be on shore when these natural calamities occur. They write their sorrow in legible terms enough; but when the tongue is obliged to talk the orator, and the look to correspond, we naval men make a very bad business at an harangue of condolence; and, perhaps, our bungling is the best proof of our sincerity, or at any rate it is a presumption that we prove how difficult it is to say what we intend. The good-natured ladies put it all down to the score of intensity of feeling.

Jane met Mizen, as all excellent creatures would meet him under the circumstances of a parent lately dead, a brother lost, and a heart palpitating with love. She entertained a very sincere regard for the man who had interested himself so much in behalf of Robert, and who added to a very personable appearance, the benefits of good birth, and the prospect of rapid promotion in the finest service in the greatest country in the world.

Mizen's condolence was couched in a few general terms; and as we are told "that the tear which is wiped by some little address, may be followed perhaps by a smile;" so the

concluding words, such as the expression of hope that Jane's life for the future might be as happy as she could wish, had all the desired effect; and Jane, feeling herself more at ease, and fancying that the young sailor was by no means clear of her toils, after thanking him with a tearful eye for all his kindness and exertions to discover her lost brother, she broke into the more common conversation of this life, and inquired concerning Captain Ruffle, who was that day expected in town. The month of exclusion being passed, Ruffle, who was one of her father's oldest friends, was to dine with them; and her father had left directions that, if Mizen called, he should be likewise provoked to the same six o'clock meeting; which being offered and accepted, Miss Jane began with an observation by no means calculated to make Mizen feel the more comfortable, namely:

"That he would find the party very diminished, for her uncle had gone to Java since Mr. Mizen last called: and that she feared the house would not be quite so cheerful as it had been."

"I had the good-fortune to meet Mr. Banana the day before yesterday," replied Mizen; "and last night I saw him myself at last fairly off for Portsmouth—as usual, under a cloud of misfortunes, and resolving most sincerely never to return to this wretched country."

And here Mizen recapitulated the last misery, with the story of the Chinese minister, a little the better for some slight flashes of fancy. It was impossible for Jane to refrain from smiling at the unfortunate man's misfortunes, and she continued:

"Poor uncle Banana! he will never know how to accommodate himself to the trifling occurrences of life, and which with the most fortunate must occur."

"And if a man will dress himself in the oriental costume, with a turban on his head, and poke it out of a window in the city, he must expect to be mistaken for even a Chinese minister. It was, I assure you, the richest treat I ever experienced."

"Did he mention any regret at parting? any wish that he might be remembered in a certain quarter? or did he leave an ode for the lady of his love?" inquired Jane, in a strain sufficiently indicative that she knew his heart had been assailed.

"No," said Mizen, in rather an off-hand manner, and without consideration. "I fancy he had quite enough of love-making, and the discovery did not add to his amusement."

"What! Mr. Mizen, do you think, really think, my uncle was so far love-stricken as to make that woman an offer?" asked Jane.

"Not of marriage, I should fancy, Miss Jane; though he went a great way on so cold a night in order to have the pleasure of seeing her: but he failed, I hear."

"Oh, indeed!" ejaculated Jane. "I suppose he went down very cautiously, and used every precaution not to be discovered."

"Just so," said Mizen, quite astonished to find that Jane had any hint of the nightly visit in the inn; "but the best of plans often fail, and he was discovered."

"By whom?" hastily inquired Jane.

"By Captain Murphy and myself," was the reply. "The fact was, he discovered himself, in endeavouring to uncover me."

"But, Mr. Mizen, I cannot understand you at all. Do you mean to say that my uncle was seen during the night going to visit this shameful woman?"

"Just so, I assure you. Caught in the very act by own confession."

"Was he in his carriage or on foot, and whereabouts did you meet him?"

"I assure you," replied the gallant lieutenant, "I took him prisoner on foot, in a room in the Swan with Two Necks, Lad-lane."

"Oh!" said Jane, "we are at cross-questions, I see, and the less we say about the business the better. Are you sure he is gone down to the ship?"

"I am quite sure I saw him in the coach. Not with one of Robert's old women and sucking-children, but with a male and mail companion."

This allusion to her lost brother summoned the heralds of wo into Jane's eyes, and she could not help asking a question, which she was certain could only be answered in one way by a man of any feeling.

"Do you think, Mr. Mizen, that my poor brother is dead, or that we have any chance of seeing him again?"

"Dead, Miss Jane!" retorted the lieutenant: "not he, depend upon it. I dare say he has been crimped by some of the press-gangs, and is now on board of a frigate."

"Crimped!" replied Jane, who might have heard of crimping codfish, but certainly never had heard it applied to any thing else; "crimped, Mr. Mizen, by a press-gang? What can you mean?

"Pray, don't distress yourself," answered Mizen; "men are not crimped like fish, although they are both hooked; the only difference being, that the fish are taken out of the sea, whereas the men are sent to it. Crimping men is another term for making them tipsy, and then, when in an unconscious state, sending them on board a man-of-war."

"Dear me, Mr. Mizen, what a dreadful thing it must be to be crimped!"

"I should think so myself, I assure you, Miss Jane, if I were a woman."

At this moment a loud rap at the door announced the arrival of Ruffle; directly afterward the iron steps of the hackney-coach rattled as they were let down, and Ruffle shortly made his appearance.

"Ah, my little Jane!" said he, seizing her hand in his yellow lemon-squeezers, "how are you, my girl? How is your father? Have you heard any news of your brother? How do you do, Mizen? what are you cruising about here for, ay?"

Ruffle was a short squat figure of a man, with red hair, ferret-eyes, and a violent temper: he was quite unlike the officers of the present day, who combine what is most requisite in an officer—the qualities of the seaman with the manners of a gentleman. Ruffle had since his eleventh year been a wanderer on the waters. He was not, as sailors say, "born under a gun, and educated in the galley;" but his knowledge was of that kind which men gain by frequently changing about, and becoming acquainted with all sorts and conditions of men. With the assurance he had gained as a captain, grew that fretfulness of temper under contradiction. To differ in opinion with him on board his own ship was presumption; but openly to notice his error, even on points not the least connected with the service, was an insult he never brooked. He was brave to a fault; but his idea of his own consequence, as the commander of one of his ma-

jesty's finest frigates, was to those who bow not to such petty tyranny, the very tip-top of human weakness. Ruffle never could understand that a lieutenant could be the equal of a captain in knowledge; and frequently fell into the mistake which is so common with ignorant men, namely, that of believing himself, without any reserve, the very best officer in his majesty's navy. He spoke his thoughts without any consideration; and, right or wrong, he maintained them. He is, perhaps, best described by the following anecdote:—

"One day, during a heavy sea, when the frigate had just weighed, and the anchor was catted, the fish-hook snapped, just as it had got the weight of the flukes, and delay was inevitable until another fish-hook could be got at. 'Forcastle, there!' said Ruffle through his speaking-trumpet, 'what is all this delay with the fish?'

"'The hook is carried away, sir,' responded the lieutenant on the forecastle.

"'D—n the hook, sir!' replied Ruffle in a rage; 'get the anchor in-board without it.'

"'It's *impossible*, sir,' answered the lieutenant.

"'*Im*—what, sir?' replied Ruffle: 'come aft here directly. Pray, sir,' said Ruffle to the lieutenant when he came on the quarter-deck, 'do you know what you said just now? that it was *impossible* to do what I had ordered. I'll have you to understand, that if I order the best bower-anchor to be pitched into the main-top, it shall be done. Now, go forward and get that anchor in-board without the fish-hook; and be kind enough to remember another time, sir, that there is no such word as *impossible* in any nautical dictionary I ever saw.'"

Beyond all doubt there is very little human labour cannot accomplish; but the best officer is he who does the most in the shortest time, and who saves unnecessary exertion. The crew of a frigate are enough to tear her to pieces; but men like your Elliots, your Gores, your Hamiltons, will do more with one watch than some I could name, had they the crew of another ship to assist their own. But Ruffle was one of the very old school; he was as upright as the late Admiral Young; as fierce as a bull-dog; a great stickler for the customs of the navy, as handed down by our great-great-grandfathers; a man rather addicted to spirits,

and who looked upon claret as cat-lapping stuff, only fit for young ladies, old women, or ministers of state.

To the latter part of the question of his captain, Mizen answered with cautious respect, "That he had called to inquire after young Ganjam, and likewise to ask if he could be serviceable to Mr. Ganjam."

"Serviceable to Mr. Ganjam?" replied Ruffle; "why, what the devil can you do for him, I should like to know?"

Jane's eyes were directed towards Mizen, and she answered for him. "Why, Captain Ruffle, he can inquire for Robert wherever his duty obliges him to be; and even if he is unsuccessful, it is some satisfaction to know that exertions have been made to discover him."

"Indeed!" said Ruffle: "his station is on Tower-hill, and not Half-moon-street: but I'll arrange that matter with him by-and-by. Where's your father, Jane?"

"I'll go and see, sir," said the timid girl, and she darted out of the room.

"I'll tell you what it is, Mizen," said the captain, "you are just making a confounded fool of yourself: you are billing and cooing with that pretty girl, and making observations on her blue eyes, instead of minding your own business. Why, if you were to get spliced, you would be as fat as an alderman before you were five-and-twenty; and you would be moored with a gouty-toe before you got the hazy side of thirty."

"Oh, sir," said Mizen, "I fancy I am not likely to fall into such miseries!"

"Miseries!" interrupted Ruffle; "there is nothing but misery in the marriage state; and I believe, if Mrs. Ruffle had not tumbled overboard, I should have led the way myself. A man has quite enough to do to take care of himself; and a sailor is the last man in the world who ought to get spliced. What's the use of a wife when you are in Jamaica and she in London, I should like to know?"

"Sir," said Mizen, "but if I were to marry, I should not be in Jamaica, with my wife in London."

"Then you are a greater fool than I took you for," replied Ruffle; "for, depend upon it, the great comfort of life is to be away from a woman. A sailor's wife is his ship; there's something in keeping her in good order, with proper rigging over her mast-heads, clean waists and scuppers, with

no ropes towing overboard, and no yarns dangling from aloft like the lashings of a bonnet."

"If," said Mizen, "the greatest comfort is to be away from your wife, what is the use of marrying her?"

"None, Mizen, none! only fools marry! Your Grand Turk is your only husband; buys and sells them—a kind of purser's contract. He is the man, rely upon it; a clever fellow that—no parsons—no rings—no settlements—"

"Ah, Ruffle, my old friend," said Ganjam, entering and followed by Jane, "I am very glad to see you, very glad indeed; you are looking as hale and hearty as you did twenty years ago; time has served you well; and you have well repaid the compliment. When do you sail again?"

"Not for some few days. I am afraid we shall have to strip her entirely. As for time and myself, we are pretty good friends, although every now and then I begin to find that I am not so active as I was in India; and the devil himself would hardly get me out of my cot at gun-fire, to go galloping over sandy roads in pursuit of health. But I am a daylight boy still, as Mizen will tell you, on board, and like a sweep of the horizon, directly you could see a white horse a mile."

"Well, Ruffle, I am really glad to see you; more especially as I think that, with your knowledge of the ways of sailors, and the means employed to entrap them, we may get some clew of Robert. But, perhaps, you would like to arrange yourself before dinner; you will meet no one but Mr. Mizen, for whose exertions I am under great obligations."

"Oh! oh!" said Ruffle, casting a knowing look at Mizen. "Come, young gentleman, let us set the rigging up before we pipe to dinner. I see how the cat's jumping, I promise you;" saying which the party separated, to assemble again half an hour afterward. The conversation among such people is not likely to be very interesting; but the evening papers contained the following paragraph:—

"Antigua.—This island was visited by a tremendous storm on Monday the 14th, which occasioned much damage. We are sorry to report the loss of the Rapid, which was wrecked on the reef extending to the northward of the island. Two persons alone were saved; John Waters and Robert Ganjam; the latter a boy of about fourteen years of age. The former is since dead, but the boy is in good

health, and relates adventures, perhaps unrivalled, and which we expect to be able shortly to lay before the public."

There could be no doubt in the minds of the whole party as to the identity of the youngster, from the description; the name was one so very uncommon, and hope, and a parent's love together, soon made the time correspond. The evening was one of joy. Jane was pleased at seeing Mizen so warmly participate in the family recovery; and more love was made by the eyes in an hour than the tongue could have done in a fortnight. Old Ruffle, who took his glass of port with an unsparing hand, soon began to speak his ideas in a confused sound, but with all the freedom of a drunkard's mind.

"I say," said this Caliban, "you may get sight of your boy, Ganjam, but take care another of your convoy does not give you the slip during the night."

"What do you mean?" said Ganjam.

"Mean! why haven't you seen Jane telegraphing with her eyes to Mizen, and he, like a good junior officer, with the answering pendant at his mast-head?"

As this remark was made before all the parties, it created no little confusion. Mizen, who understood the force of the nautical expression, felt it most; and Jane, who knew quite enough of our jargon to comprehend its meaning, blushed, as the sailors say, "up to the eyes."

"Ah, there they go again!" said Ruffle, "both with their colours up; both the same; friends of course. I told that Tomfool, Mizen, that he was getting into an eddy that would slew him round until he got fairly aback and adrift; but I shall step in and come senior officer over him."

"Really," said Jane, who, if she did feel any growing attachment, had never manifested the least symptom, saving in the present blush, which would have mantled her cheek just as much from the suspicion as from the reality,—"really, Captain Ruffle, I cannot comprehend you at all."

"No, Jane, my pretty little girl; but Mizen does."

"Indeed, sir," said Mizen, "I am quite as much at a loss as Miss Jane."

"No doubt you are," replied Ruffle, taking down a very respectable potion of that dark-coloured liquid which is oftener a concoction of logwood than the juice of the grape;

"no doubt you are; you are just as much at a loss as she is, and no more, I promise you."

Ganjam, who had himself been a voyager on the great deep, and who understood all the terms, was anxious, for the sake of all concerned, to change the conversation; at the same time considering that the half-drunken commodore had certainly discovered the state of the parties in a very unfortunate manner, for these kind of detections often frustrate the intentions of lovers. And be it said, with the utmost reverence, that Ganjam, who knew Mizen to be of a good family, and also that he might in time inherit a fortune of some magnitude, thought it just as well to let the affair progress, if possible; he therefore turned the subject of ladies blushes and signals into a channel very likely to call into power all the rhetoric of the commodore, by asking him if he had ever recovered the wound he got in the action between the two frigates, when Ruffle was, of course, victorious.

"Oh!" said Jane, "I dare say the commodore has been wounded more than once; and I shall leave him to his historical recollections." Saying which, she rose from the table, and retreated to her own room immediately, of course to retail to her maid the hints and innuendoes thrown out by the gallant officer. The said maid being a very particular favourite of Mizen's, for she had, quite accidentally, managed to be on the staircase just as, in many of his morning visits, he happened to be passing; and Mizen, who was a sailor, and consequently a very great admirer of any thing young and in petticoats, always stopped to ask an innocent question as to Wilson's health, and to compliment her on the roses which grew on her cheeks.

"Ah! wounds!" said Ruffle, "I have had my share of them, and have got the usual reward, a pension and a promise. But yours is the service, Ganjam; you have nothing to do but learn a few words of that outlandish lingo, be called a judge, have a host of fellows, with silver sticks, roaring out 'Here comes the mighty tiger of war, the protector of the poor, the shadow of the universe!' pocket John Company's money, and then, after you have eaten yourself into a torpid liver, come home upon a pension that would not be given to an Admiral of the Blue, who had risked his

life all his life, and who never knew comfort but when the weather was steady and his wounds did not shoot."

"Why," said Ganjam, "John Company is a very good paymaster; the service is an excellent one, and I certainly shall never complain; for I liked the climate, was happy and contented, and, had it not been for my family and my friends, would gladly have ended my days near the surf of the Madras beach, or in a bungalo at Ennore."

"I remember you there," said Ruffle, "when I was a midshipman, and you a steady-going counsellor. I think I am taking a long drink now," and, suiting the action to the word, he took as much as the glass would hold, finishing by an observation, the truth of which not even John Cox would have objected to, "that there was great pleasure in drinking when a man was hot and thirsty."

Ruffle was just in that state which would have been followed by three dozen on board the Saturn, had one of his ship's company got as "many cloths in the wind;" and, like all half-drunken men, very fine, very foolish, and very frolicsome in his disguised state. The vein of humour was again directed towards poor Mizen, who sat like Mr. Tapes, the solicitor's clerk, at Sir Mark Terrington's, as mentioned by that excellent writer Theodore Hook, in "Sayings and Doings." Mizen, however, retired, not being able to stand the fire, and not daring to return it, to the drawing-room, while Ganjam and Ruffle endeavoured to assure themselves of Robert's safety, of the flavour of the port, and of the best mode of recovering the boy.

Every thing seemed to go against the stream in Ganjam's family. Banana had gone out in a merchant ship, when, had he remained four days longer, he might have had an offer from Ruffle to be safely taken to India in the Saturn. And now another little trifling event was about to occur by no means calculated to render Jane the happier.

Her state of mind may be easily described. She was not actually in love; but she had formed a very fraternal kind of affection for Mizen. He was constantly there; he was always reserved, modest, unaffected. It required all Jane's power of rhetoric to force him into a conversation, and to draw him out to exhibit the knowledge possessed by a lieutenant of a frigate. In truth, be it said, it did not amount to much. Sailors in those days saw no classes of men but

in the division list: and although they visited the world, that is, the anchor was let go either off Cherumpee Point, Bocca Tigris, or near Sandy Hook, yet the activity required in ships of war, and the keenness of the cruising, prevented them having much intercourse with the shore; so that all quarters were in the quarter-bill. The whole stock of knowledge of human nature was to be drawn from the pictures constantly before them; and hence the universal shyness twenty years ago exhibited by sailors whenever they came into modest society on shore; but there their shyness terminated. A girl in society as silly as a Siberian could awe a lieutenant by merely speaking to him; but very different was the occurrence if a female not of that retiring modesty presented herself. Thus, with Jane, it had been an up-hill game. She liked Mizen for his sincerity. He could not pay a compliment: he might have stuttered and stammered a set of words without any meaning; but as to calmly beginning a flattery, he had it not in his composition: his blush might have spoken more than his tongue, and the abashed look of his eyes might have been more convincing than the oath of the most fervid admirer. Before Jane, Mizen was all natural timidity; he looked at her with the eye of admiration, sweetened by expectation.

When Mizen retired to the drawing-room, being absent without leave, as Ruffle said, the first thing he did was to stir the fire into a blaze, and to cough a little, thus making a signal and firing a gun, in order to awake the attention of the timid lady, at the same time quite forgetting, if he ever knew, that the ladies' rooms are very seldom on the same floor as the drawing-room. It so happened that, when Mizen left the parlour, Mrs. Wilson was going down-stairs, and saw our hero crossing the hall on his ascension. It occurred to her to watch if Ganjam and Ruffle followed; but, having listened at the door, and heard as animated a discussion as a half-drunken captain could maintain, it occurred to her that her young mistress might have left her handkerchief in the drawing-room, and she thought she might as well go and look for it; and accordingly, without any preface by way of a knock at the door, she entered the drawing-room without noticing Mizen (who stood rather in the shade of the flickering flame), and, humming a tune, began to look into each chair, put down the pillows of the sofa,

&c. No sooner did Mizen espy the strange sail than he resolved to hail; and not having the fear of modesty before him, he gently stole behind Wilson, and, putting his hands round her waist, endeavoured to kiss her.

The sudden low ejaculation and the hasty retreat were admirably performed; and when that paragon of perfection was at a respectable distance, she broke out in gentle accents, for fear, perhaps, of being disturbed by the entrance of Jane.

"I wonder, sir, I'm sure, at such rudeness. I do wonder that gentlemen can do such things."

"Why, my pretty Wilson," said Mizen, "when one sees such a pretty little divinity as yourself, one is tempted to go beyond the strict line of decorum. Tell me, Wilson, my little dear, were you ever married? Dear me! child, what red lips you have got. Do you paint them?"

"No, sir, indeed not I. Nature paints them, as she does all other flowers."

"*Tulips*, I suppose, Wilson. Ay, I wonder if they smell as sweet," continued Mizen, advancing a little, as gallant Frenchmen do when they fight their murderous barrier-duels.

"I dare say they do, sir," replied Wilson. "But I wonder what Miss Jane would say, if she heard you talking about other women's lips?"

"Why, Wilson, my dear, do you think she would care one straw about me? Did you make that dress, Wilson? I never saw one so well made to show off a naturally excellent figure."

Wilson blushed a little, and only thought Jane's figure far superior to hers.

"All padded and bolstered, I suppose," said Mizen. "Not all like this," and the gallant officer was alongside. "One can feel this slender waist has not been hauled at for an hour. And now I see those pretty little white teeth, I should like to see if this is paint or not upon your lips. Oh no!" said he, kissing her. "No, by Jove! it's all natural, and as sweet as a garden."

"Do leave me, sir," replied the enraged Wilson. "I really wonder at your impertinence, that I do."

"Oh yes," said Mizen, taking her hand and patting it affectionately, while the poor innocent girl was so surprised

that she never withdrew it; "you are a little darling," and once more encircling her waist, imprinted one or two kisses on her rosy lips.

It is quite astonishing how old Time contrives to fly when his course is on flowers, and when a little love is concerned the hoary old fellow flogs his steeds, and sends us daylight long before we want it. In the present case, if time did not send the chariot of the sun, it warned the daughter of the evening that she had better be preparing that beverage which Ganjam knew to be genuine, and which was brought in chests from the India-house. About the same moment Ganjam and Ruffle having, after a warm debate, settled that nothing could be done until more authentic news was communicated, or a letter received, and the latter having drained every drop of the mixture as before related, got his hands upon the man-ropes, as he called the bannisters, and was hauling his load of provisions and wine after him, while Ganjam kept smiling at the slow advance, and Jane was peeping over the staircase watching the doubtful progress.

"Wilson, my little dear," said Mizen, who had seated himself by the fire with that delicate, shrinking, modest-looking creature on his knee; his right arm round her waist, and his left playing with the rough fore-finger of the milliner—"will you come to the theatre with me to-morrow night? I can bring you home in the evening, you know."

"Dear me, sir, you are so kind that I should like to see the play with you; and if I can get permission, I shall be very happy, I am sure; but what would the world say?"

"The world are a pack of fools," said Mizen. "And what care we for the world?" (another little kiss.) "But, to be sure, I think we had better part company now. What was Jane about when you left her?"

"She was at work, Mr. Mizen; and she never comes down until nine o'clock."

"Nine o'clock!" said our hero; "why it's past nine o'clock now: so, give me another kiss, and get leave for to-morrow night."

And here this amiable primitive pair walked like the drawings of Adam and Eve during their innocence, although rather better garbed for winter—until at the door, when Mizen desired her to remember her promise, and fixed the hour; then turning the handle and opening it, he gently

pushed the pretty Wilson right against the commodore, and in full sight of Ganjam, Jane, and Co.

The early habits and education of midshipmen do not exactly qualify them for scenes like this; and when they are suddenly taken aback, it is a long while before they can brace about and recover their presence of mind: so surely as they endeavour to extricate themselves from a blunder, so surely do they flounder deeper and deeper. Wilson, who had very often been used to narrow detections with others in the house, and who was one of the prettiest lumps of deceit ever moulded into human form, directly she found herself in this very untoward position, turned round and said:

"Thank you, sir, I have found it;" and forthwith, and with as much celerity as that never-to-be-forgotten actor Kean managed to display the scales in Shylock, when those balancers of flesh were demanded, she displayed one of Jane's pocket-handkerchiefs, which, in a conversation with her mistress up-stairs, she had learned was left by accident in the drawing-room. Without the slightest change of countenance, she passed the assembled group; while Mizen felt his cheeks burning with blushes, and inwardly cursed the flame which he had himself provoked, both in the woman and in the fire.

"Well done," said the half-drunken captain; "well done, Mr. Mizen. So, I suppose, you left the parlour to have a little chat with that pretty maid."

Mizen underwent all the tortures of certain people which the good folks of this world have provided with lodgings elsewhere: he could have swallowed Ruffle, wine and all, if he dared.

"Pretty good this, Jane," said Ruffle. "A privateer in the convoy. I say, Ganjam, you had better keep a good look-out for smuggled goods, and dub yourself in as searching-officer to the customs."

"I assure you," said Ganjam, with the gravest face imaginable, "we have no smuggled goods in this house."

"I think it rather hard, Captain Ruffle," said Jane, "that you should attack poor Mr. Mizen in that way, who appears rather unwell, and perhaps would like some tea."

Mizen darted a look, as much as to say, much obliged to you, Jane, for that lift, which might as well have been omitted; and in the utmost possible confusion he made a bungle

when he most desired to be eloquent. The fact was, he felt his guilt, and he was in modest society.

The tea came; conversation flagged; Ruffle dozed; Jane sighed; Mizen blushed; Ganjam thought; eleven struck; exit Mizen, bowing; candles lighted; hopes expressed; hour of breakfast named; Jane's hands shaken; papa's cheeks kissed; Ruffle's grog swallowed; exeunt omnes—curtain falls.

The conversation which took place between Jane and her maid was satisfactory. Wilson admitted she thought Mizen very handsome, and certainly very much in love with her young mistress; and Jane, who readily believed Wilson's story as far as regarded the pocket-handkerchief—indeed, she was much too innocent to suspect—kept her maid in long discourses as to the dangers of a sea-life, the folly of marrying men who had such a profession to follow; and then, after many a sigh, a kind good-night.

CHAPTER XIII.

> Take her hence:
> Her heart is but o'ercharged; she will recover—
> Beseech you, tenderly apply to her
> Some remedies for life.
>
> *Winter's Tale.*

The packet sailed; the wind was strong; the passengers had been sick; and, after the vessel had reached the latitude about four degrees north of the Bermudas, she struck across towards the Western Islands. She was a clever vessel of her size, mounted eight guns, and had a complement of about twenty men. The war was then at its height: there was hardly a friendly port to be found in Europe. Privateers were plentiful, and pirates not altogether unknown. The vessel was kept, as much as such vessels can be kept, in preparation for action; but such had been the vigilance of the men-of-war that few rencounters with ships of a foreign nation had taken place, and the privateers more frequently lurked about the Channel than ventured out in

the open ocean. Some, however, lingered in the neighbourhood of the Western Islands, and one of those shortly hove in sight, showing evident symptoms of a disposition to convert the property of others to their own use. The packet endeavoured to avoid an engagement; for it was conformable with the orders given to those vessels, that they should never risk an action if it could be possibly avoided. Consequently all sail was crowded, and all manner of manœuvres practised, such as hoisting a signal, &c. to scare away the bird of prey. It was useless: the wind kept steady, and about four o'clock in the afternoon the first shot from the stranger passed over the packet. The Skylark was in for a fight, and Macdonald, who, with all his parsimony, was no niggard of shot, made preparations and a speech prior to his engagement.

There was one difficulty to overcome before we grappled with the other. We had on board a lady of great personal attractions, who had been recently married to a very affluent man, who was likewise a passenger on board. When the privateer hove in sight, she ridiculed the idea that any vessel could be taken when her dear Montague was on board to protect her; and she, in the excess of her love, and her conscientious belief that Montague was the finest of his species, forgot that the object of her affections was, in the first place, human; and in the second place, and which was equally bad under the circumstances, "no sailor."

Soldiers, who are devils on shore, when they have room to march and countermarch, form squares and change fronts, feel very differently in a narrow space, cooped up, like chickens in a pen, on board a ship. Not that the bravery which distinguishes our gallant soldiers is at all diminished, but that they feel that the ship must be managed as well as the guns, and that it is as requisite to know how to point a yard as a musket; the only thing they can bring into the battle is their determined courage and strength: thus many serve like common sailors at a gun, and submit to the dictation of a person much below them in intellect or in resources.

Macdonald was a thorough-going sailor. He was a plain-spoken man, rough in his manner, and by no means prepossessing in his appearance. He saw, as the enemy approached, the necessity of warning his passengers of the

probable result of such an unequal contest; and he felt for Montague all that a plain, blunt, honest sailor can feel for another in distress. He told him in his broad Scotch, "That he had better place the pretty lady below, out of the way of shot;" adding, "that Montague might accompany her, if he thought fit."

This nearly brought on a premature fight; for the husband rejected the offer with disdain, at the same time wondering how Macdonald could have the impudence to suggest it.

"Aweel, aweel," spluttered the captain, "I did na wish to fash you. I spoke it as the father of a family and the husband of an affectionate wife, and we'll na quarrel about the beesiness just now, you see; so just place your leddy below before the next shot comes nearer to us."

Montague shook his head, and said he was sorry for misinterpreting the captain's intention; but he feared his wife would not consent to be stowed away below.

"Weel, you see, Mr. Montague, it's na use the leddy not conseenting, for she must be placed in the cockpit; for petticoats are as bad as squalls during an action; and I should na wonder if she had not to change ships; for that fellow will not let a handsome cretur like that remain on board the Skylark, after she changes her colours and her course."

"Why, captain, you don't mean to say there is any danger of being taken by that dirty-looking devil of a brig, do you?"

"Don't talk so loud, Mr. Montague, about what I think; but you may just rely upon it, that she would not come on to a vessel of the Skylark's man-of-war-like appearance, if she did not think herself more than a match for us. So say no words about our thoughts, but put the leddy below, and get to your quarters like a sailor: rely upon it we'll have a fight, and a good one, for the honour of the service. I'm no' the man to see that tri-coloured rag, which has always been the emblem of revolution and republics, and under which more robberies and murders have been committed than under the red flag and the crescent of Turkey, wave over our own bonny bunting without a struggle."

"But, supposing they did take us, captain, I imagine they would treat us well, and like gentlemen."

"That depends very much upon the humour they are in.

I have known them crop the ears of the gentlemen, and make bad use of the leddies, before now."

"My dear," said Montague to his pretty wife, "I think you had better go below, out of the way of the shot and the confusion. You are, you see, only in the way now, and might, perhaps, meet with some accident."

"I would rather, my love," said the enchanting creature, "stay with you, and share all the dangers which are to come. But I suppose, although of course there is a risk, yet that the event is certain—we must be victorious!"

"No doubt is apprehended on that score," replied the husband; "but we may be longer in beating him off than you suspect; and you might be frightened when you see the first human blood shed which ever those eyes witnessed."

"No, Montague, my dear, I have seen a sister bled, and know what it is. I shall stay by your side, and show you that I do not fear death, when you are near me."

"My good leddy," said Macdonald, "just be gude enough to step below for a moment, for we are going to tack ship, and I'm afraid the ropes might hurt your little self."

"I have made up my mind to stay on deck, captain," said the heroine; "and I shall do what my husband does, and be where he is!"

"A woman on deck during the action!" said the captain; "no, no! your dress would catch fire from the powder, and you would be burnt to a cinder without assistance. No, no! do you stay below, and your husband will go down and see you every five minutes."

It was with great persuasion that this poor creature consented to be separated from her husband; and even the parting which took place by the companion-ladder proved how requisite it was to remove her: for in the wildness of her manner and the expression of her fears she nearly unmanned the crew; who, unused to the constant whistling of shot, the music of Charles XII., were easily victims to fear already predominating. No one could look at the gallant manner the Frenchman came on without being persuaded that he was sure of his prey. The tri-coloured flag flew at his peak, and a pendant from his mast-head: there was no uncertainty as to intention; she steered steadily for the weather-quarter of the Skylark; and when within pistol-

shot shortened sail to her topsails and foresails, jib and boom-mainsail, as rapidly and silently as an English frigate could have done.

The Skylark, on the starboard-tack, running free about a point, finding it impossible to escape, and knowing the danger of carrying a press of sail during an engagement, shortened sail also, keeping her main-topsails shivering, and forging ahead about four knots an hour, the vessel being well under command.

Previously to this, every precaution was taken to secure the masts and yards, and to render every thing as snug as possible: but even the man most accustomed to hope could hardly regard the eight small guns and the slender ship's company with any idea of victory; the only chance was that an accidental shot might cut away a spar of the enemy's; under those circumstances alone could escape be possible. I was made a powder-monkey, but had formed a desperate notion of the security of the main-top, and had I been able to have got aloft without detection, I think I should have attempted it. Nothing could persuade me that the enemy was not a pirate, and I saw before me all the murders and massacres which had occurred in the Rapid. There was, however, a steadiness about the men which rather inspired me with courage: they seemed resolved to fight to the last; and the cheering words of the captain, as he passed round his decks and inspected the preparations himself, very much contributed, in my opinion, to the success of the day. But then *I* was on board, and that overbalanced every chance. Every thing I touched seemed to wither; every step I had taken led to the most miserable results. I had only been rescued from the wreck to meet more misfortunes, and, in my own firm opinion, the present day was to add to my miseries.

As the captain passed round the decks he stopped at each gun, and spoke to each man by name; those who were Englishmen were reminded of what could be done by the gallant feats which had been achieved by the British navy: to the Irish, who were few, he spoke of the coming fight as a row most relished by that spirited nation; and to the Scotch he varied his manner, talking of Aberdeen awa, and of the bairns and the toddy, of scenes familiar with them in the highlands, and of prospects the brighter from the diffi-

culty of reaching them. This is a very great secret in danger. I have known a band of music inspire men to deeds which, if unassisted or unaided by the cheering sound, would never have been attempted. I have seen men who had not the slightest chance of success rally and succeed at the voice of a favourite; and history records many, many desperate and successful results from the wild manner of a maniac, or the cheer of the leader. Thus, when Mohammed, in one of his first battles, was beaten, his men overcome by fatigue, his numbers thinned, his soldiers dispirited, the day almost irrecoverably lost, that wary leader, who found the voice of valour fail, and knew the weakness and the superstition of the ignorant, took a handful of sand, and throwing it in the air, said aloud, "Let the faces of my enemies be covered with confusion!" The coolness of the act, the confidence of the expression, inspired the dispirited; a charge followed, and the prophet of predestination was victorious.

The action began by the Frenchman, when he was close on the quarter, luffing suddenly up and firing his larboard broadside; then instantly putting his helm a-weather, endeavouring to rake the Skylark with his starboard guns. The manœuvre, though excellent in the fastest sailer, which the Frenchman had ascertained himself to be, is one of great danger otherwise: to relinquish the weather-gage is to abandon an advantage, excepting in a very strong breeze; for in light breezes it is of the greatest consequence to maintain the windward position. Macdonald saw the object, and bore right up, firing his larboard-guns as they came to bear, and directing the men to point their guns as high as they could: for a packet the broadside was respectable enough; but it did no apparent damage. The Frenchman bore up also, and was now on the Skylark's larboard-quarter, when she attempted to rake her again by rounding-to on the starboard-tack: this was obviated by our coming-to on the larboard-tack, and for a moment the action ceased. The Frenchman immediately made sail and tacked, returning again to the same plan. This was obviated by our tacking also, and endeavouring to cross to windward of the enemy. Finding that impossible, we passed close to leeward, and got the worst of a broadside composed of round, and grape, and canister, and broken nails, and every cursed thing of sufficient hardness to be vomited from a twelve

pounder. I confess it staggered us a little, and one or two of the men gave up the ghost at once, while the moans of others, badly wounded, tended to dispirit the rest. Hitherto, however, we had maintained our own, although, from the crash of the enemy's fire, we were satisfied she was too heavy for us.

I can hardly imagine what confounded ill-luck could have prompted Macdonald to tack again. When a vessel has ascertained her inferiority, she ought never to risk this trifling manœuvre, but should always ware in preference; because she never loses her way, and the ship is under command. It may be laid down as a rule never to be deviated from, that in an action tacking ought never to be practised; if your adversary is near, and quick in his movements, you may be disabled in stays. We had hauled our main-topsail, when it was discovered that the fore-brace was shot away; and although we endeavoured, by using the bowline for a brace, yet we could not swing the fore-yard. The enemy had tacked, and was passing to windward of us; and as he passed right ahead, the raking fire completed the mischief. The jib was shot away, the fore-yard slapped in half, and such confusion created by the fore-topmast going, that a child might see the day was gone. The Skylark now flew to, the after-sails being full, and in that position she remained. The enemy, perceiving her advantage, tacked again, and afterward waring round, hove-to on the weather-bow; and taking up this advantageous position, which rendered it impossible for us to bring our guns to bear, her firing was continued with more leisure; each shot striking us, and very shortly, as the direction was high, completely crippling us, rendering us a perfect wreck.

All discipline, little as we ever had, was lost. The crew called out to strike, which was firmly opposed by Montague and Macdonald. When the enemy directed their fire at our hull, the scene became a little more distressing. Among the first victims was Montague; he fell by the combings of the hatchway. The captain was afterward very seriously wounded, and one or two of the men groaned most awfully. The survivors cried aloud to strike; and as no one opposed so good a resolution, I jumped abaft and hauled down the colours. The Frenchman immediately hove all aback, and, drifting past us on the weather-quarter,

hove-to. The firing having ceased altogether, some of the men betook themselves below to pocket as many valuables belonging to themselves or others as they could lay their hands on. Some put on an additional shirt; some got drunk, and all got disorderly.

Poor Macdonald, almost unconscious of the scene around him, was leaning against a gun-slide, sitting on the deck abreast of the companion, bleeding to death rapidly: he asked for water, which I instantly got him. In the mean time a boat had been lowered from the Frenchman, and about a dozen men instantly jumped into her. At this moment the handsome and lovely Mrs. Montague came on deck, and, in her hurry and agitation, with her eyes fixed upon the pale and dying captain, she placed her foot upon the corpse of her husband. Her shriek of horror at the discovery, her sudden fall and faint, her beautiful figure extended over the body of Montague, awakened even the last voice of the captain, who merely uttered, "Poor cretur!" and died.

The scene was changed when the eager plunderers came alongside. It was a moment of confusion on one side and animation on the other, that beat all I had ever witnessed. When the victors were certain that no further resistance could be made by us, and that the prize was their own, some jumped below, and began the system of plunder for which privateers have been celebrated; some, having more at heart the honour of the contest, rushed aft; disregarding the scene of wo over which they leaped, to plant the tri-coloured flag above the ensign of England. However, thank God! it was seldom, very seldom during the war, they had that gratification; and, as usual, I of course was doomed to be an eye-witness of this exaltation. One or two, who seemed to wear some official authority, were busy in making our crew, who were not wounded, get into the boat, and, after having placed about ten therein, one Frenchman remained with them, and they were made to row the boat towards their future prison. The plunder below was pretty fairly shared out among these legal thieves. They broke open the chests; they filled their pockets with all the portable valuables; and they gave full vent to that spirit which was

the characteristic feature of their armies in Spain and their brigands in Italy.

Poor Mrs. Montague remained unnoticed, until one of the men observed her to move; when he raised her head, and bathed her temples with the remaining water which I had procured for the captain. He seemed much struck with her beauty, and certainly at once laid aside the warrior and the thief, in order to restore her to animation. On reason returning, she could scarcely be made to believe the painful reality of her situation. A husband dead; herself a prisoner; her effects plundered; her best friend in the captain a corpse! Not a soul to whom she could unburden her mind, who could share her grief or listen to her miseries! Her maid, who was a creole, of some pretensions to personal charms, fell a victim to a Frenchman. I alone could in her own language listen to misfortunes which I considered as by no means equal to my own; but the similarity of our feelings was the prelude to a friendship which, while it lasted, ameliorated the sufferings of both.

The prisoners made secure; the prize rendered sea-worthy; the ropes spliced; another fore-topmast rigged; the fore-yard repaired, and ten men placed on board the Skylark, both vessels made sail for L'Orient, I being left on board the prize; but the day after I was removed, at the request of Mrs. Montague. I will do the Frenchmen, whom I always hated with a national hatred which no reciprocity-system can obliterate, the justice to state, that after they had robbed as completely as they could, they became friendly, and in many instances kind and obliging. For the first two or three days it was proposed to restore us the Skylark, as she was light, and had no cargo sufficiently valuable to make it worth their while to separate their crew in navigating her; but as the Hirondelle, for that was the name of the privateer, had, previously to her discovery of the Skylark, shaped her course homeward, the national vanity of the French was gratified by the exhibition of a prize nearly as large as the capturer; and it was calculated, and perhaps justly, that they would be regarded as the greatest naval heroes of that sea-beaten nation.

Now came another instance of misfortune. That as yet, at the age of fourteen, I had only been kidnapped from my proper path; been engaged in a traffic I abhorred; been

nearly the victim of pirates; twice or thrice in the hands of murderers; been wrecked; and, when hope was brightest, made a prisoner, was nothing uncommon, although it certainly was not pleasant; but now came a proof how the ill wind of fortune always blows, when once it regularly sets in. All our crew who had survived the conflict, and were prisoners, made light of the capture: they quite ridiculed the idea of both vessels getting in safe. The Bay of Biscay was literally thronged with English cruisers, it was almost impossible to pass without some one seeing us; and yet day after day passed. A sail was discovered; she was apparently a man-of-war; of course shunned: she never chased. We continued our course until midnight on the 5th of June, when, it being agreed among our nautical enemies that they were within about fifteen miles of the land, the privateer hove-to, the prize continuing to run for about half an hour longer, when she also hove-to for the night. Now, indeed, hope itself began to fade away; here we were, by chronometers well regulated, within a short distance of the port: the wind, however, suddenly shifted and blew off shore, which was the only circumstance favourable. Not a vessel was to be seen; the hands were on deck, and at about half an hour before daylight both vessels were under all sail. Daylight dawned, and we saw a large frigate four miles to leeward of us; she was instantly in chase, and I felt as within the power of being rescued. The land was visible, about ten miles to windward; the water was smooth and the breeze fresh. The Hirondelle at first held her own, and certainly did not lose a foot; but the Skylark, although upwards of four miles to windward of us, evidently lost ground fast. The frigate carried her single-reefed topsails and topgallant-sails in spite of the squalls, and seemed to fly through the water; even I was convinced that she latterly gained rapidly upon us. It was tack for tack each time, as the frigate forereached and got us abeam; she went about, while every tack we made, the water became smoother, and our escape the more certain. The Skylark was soon only half a mile to windward of us, and the next tack brought us within hail; it was evident she would be recaptured, and we had no time to change the men. The captain hailed her, and told her to stand on the starboard tack, and to carry all sail, giving the frigate a good stretch to the eastward if

she chased the Skylark, and rendering the escape of the Hirondelle a certainty. The bait took; the frigate, finding she gained so rapidly on the Skylark, resolved to pursue her, to drop a boat on board, and then to endeavour to cut us off. But, however good the manœuvre, it failed; for the man in command of the prize felt his personal liberty as nothing to the escape of the Hirondelle, of which he was part owner, and which had on board sundry bags of doubloons, the result of sea-attorneyship: he, therefore, when the frigate brought him abeam and tacked, edged away about a point, and endeavoured to increase his distance; this was soon perceived by the frigate, and she tacked again. Both vessels were now hull down in the distance, and when we were safe under the batteries of L'Orient, we could distinguish from the mast-heads the two vessels together, and the Skylark again the property of Englishmen. We were no sooner anchored, than we were all, with the exception of Mrs. Montague, sent on shore; she was reserved for two or three reasons; but her personal charms would alone have been sufficient. I took my hasty leave of her with deep regret, and she shed tears at seeing her only companion, and one whom misery had rendered agreeable, torn from her; and then she recollected that I might have been free but for her. It was useless thinking; the man in authority, who wore the blue and silver of the gendarmerie of Napoleon's time, soon made us feel that we were indeed prisoners; he hurried us to the shore; and an hour afterward we had been sketched by the police, our descriptions were taken, and we found ourselves lodged, barred, and bolted in a French prison.

It is needless attempting to describe our residence: whatever can be imagined as disgusting and degrading; whatever can best portray squalid wretchedness, vile loathsome dirt, and dinginess; whatever scant provisions and numerous vermin could effect, had here been effected. Often, ah, often, I turned my hurried recollection to the remembrance of the last twenty-four hours. Had not the kindness of Mrs. Montague, or rather the wish to be serviceable to me, occasioned my being removed, I should have been safe in the recapture; but now, all that could combine to crush and crumble the spirit which had borne up against all misfortune combined against me. I had not one

farthing in the world; it was useless my attempting to claim rights by birth, which were denied to common sailors. The day dawned; we were all tied to a horse's tail in a row; we were flanked by horse gendarmerie; we were followed by the same; we were led by the same; and after a painful march I was duly lodged in Verdun jail, there to remain until the glorious year which saw the downfall of Napoleon. —Reader, it was the Saturn which recaptured the Skylark.

Still misfortune clung to me. Twice we endeavoured to escape from the strong barrier which enclosed us. We worked with an old nail to remove a stone, and the exertion and excitement nearly killed me. When all was done which was required; when the ropes were prepared by which we were to descend into the ditch, and after swimming that, to mount another wall and descend it on the other side; when every thing was prepared, I felt the demon of misfortune at my elbow, and fancied I heard a laugh of triumph at the result. The night came, my companions descended, the foremost passed the ditch and mounted the further wall; I, being the lightest, was kept for the last; the man who preceded me floundered in the water; the half-sleeping sentinel was awakened into activity; his suspicions were confirmed; the alarm was spread, and I was caught in the very act of lowering myself into the ditch. Even the comforts I had enjoyed were now denied me; I was watched like a wild beast, and all those little solaces, by which the wretched endeavour to smooth the pillow of misfortune, were broken in upon and crushed, by the eye of vigilance being always upon me. When I laboured to escape, hope kept me alive and determined; but when I saw my companions free, and when day after day passed and no tidings reached us of their capture; when I thought of all they enjoyed in their homes, surrounded by their relations, pleased and pleasing in recapitulating their escape, I fell into the contrary extreme, and moped through life, unheeding and unheeded. Only one good resulted from my captivity: I learned another language; and from my youth and natural quickness, soon acquired a proper pronunciation and a fluency of expression; this in after-life led to my destruction. The useful man, who is made the convenience of others, is only cherished as long as he is really of service, and then life and the

chapter end with, "Poor fellow! it is quite a pity he can do nothing for himself!"

CHAPTER XIV.

But examine with care, and fix not suddenly; on thy present choice depends thy future happiness.—*Œconomy of Human Life.*

I RETURNED to the home of my youth after an absence of six years, a care-worn and broken-hearted boy of nineteen, my education neglected, and the precepts of religion obliterated. In prison, prayers are unknown; the low curse, the ill-tempered snarl, the fretful, feverish humour is only forgotten when the heart is for a moment recreating in a trivial amusement. It is true, that our sorrowful evenings had, during captivity, been slightly alleviated by the hope that a day would arrive when we should breathe the air of freedom, and be restored to our rights and our relatives; but the evil seed had been sown, the stay of all hope had been destroyed, and I felt the truth of what I afterward read, that "Religion, the rewards of which are very distant, and which is animated merely by faith and hope, will glide by degrees from the mind, if it be not reinvigorated and reimpressed by frequent calls to worship, and the salutary instance of example." Let skepticism remove the wholesome restraint, and life, however apparently spent in hours of dissipation, will, in the cool time of reflection, be haunted by doubts and fears, which ultimately rob us of quietude, and render us restless and melancholy.

I returned home hardly one degree better than a savage: uncouth in my manners, a stranger to the habits and customs of those with whom I was about to associate, I felt in every society a chilling inferiority; I acknowledged by my servility the superiority of my companions, and yet even I was sometimes envied. My knowledge of French, and my probable fortune at my father's death, were often sounded in my ears; as if the first was coveted, and the second a consummation to be wished. I shrank from the false flatterers,

and I thank God, know and feel that the wish of a parent's death never entered my mind.

The first operation, after cleansing my garb, was to cleanse my mind, to purify my expressions, and turn the ribaldry of sailors into the expressions of society; and very much was accomplished by the constant intercourse with women, and the care and devotion of my father in superintending my studies. The three years spent in reading and cultivating my mind were the three happiest of my life, for then my time was employed, and I could not, from my retirement and occupations, be involved in any serious mischief.

It was now resolved I should travel, and preparations were gradually making for launching me again into the world. It was odd how I still clung to the sea; and how often, when reposing in security, I dwelt upon the pleasures of that stormy profession. I could, in imagination, recline upon the forecastle, watching the graceful rise of the ship, and as it mounted a heavy sea, I could recall the time when the dark clouds flew over the moon, and when the forked lightning played among the rigging; and strange it was, and is, that even now I look back to those first impressions with joy, and feel a pleasure in the recollection of my early misfortunes.

Although I had been the first to hint my wish to travel, I soon became the last to forward the scheme. Among the friends of my sister Jane was one Lucy Stackpole, a girl of seventeen; tall, graceful, meek, mild, and modest. She appeared to me the most unaffected and unassuming creature I had ever seen. I know not how it was, but I frequently found myself alone with her, and she seemed always pleased hearing me relate some scene of misfortune which had happened during my early life; and, when relating the adventures, her beautiful large blue eyes would be fixed upon me, swimming in the very expression of pity. Day after day she asked for another and another adventure, and hours slipped by without our heeding the flight of time. I certainly felt myself always much gratified when I was with Lucy, but I never for a moment considered myself in love, until my sister hinted her suspicion that I certainly was a little enamoured of her fair and graceful friend. I thought much upon this subject, and actually brought myself at last to believe

that she was the angel destined to render my life happy, convinced by various little circumstances, such as tender and expressive looks, a slight squeezing of the hand at parting, a flush at meeting, and now and then an involuntary sigh. I likewise became confirmed that she was not a little smitten with the unfortunate man. To be sure, there were one or two trivial drawbacks to our union. Lucy was one of a family of sixteen: the father, although opulent, had no spare money to give his daughters. They were all lovely, amiable girls, well educated and agreeable; but the sons required the money which could be spared; and Mr. Stackpole often said that his daughters must take care to marry well, for that he had nothing to give, although he lived at the rate of £9000. a year, and made as great a show as any man of his station. Lovers never think of such dross as gold; I wished only for a cottage pleasantly situated on a cliff, overlooking my favourite ocean, to listen to its roar and its surges, to hear the wind as it rushed through the trees, and then to turn to the beautiful, placid appearance of my Lucy, and feel shelter and security in her arms. Visions of glory and of grandeur floated not before my eyes; but blessed in solitude with her I most loved, I thought of days of ease and nights of pleasure, of the sweets of retirement, and the comforts of domestic life. My manner was now altered; from a man serious in his studies, and who strove to occupy every moment, I became listless and indifferent. In vain I turned the historic page; in vain I endeavoured to fathom the mysteries of my religion; in vain I pored over Euclid, or dived into Algebra; when I closed the volume against which *I had set my face*, I found my time and labour had been lost. I recollected not one word or one figure of my occupation, and I wondered how, while I had been tracing a figure, I had seen only a face: from inattention I became idle; and, as Dr. Johnson says, "Love has no power over any but those he finds unemployed," so the little god ensured his victim. Lucy was conscious that such an alliance would never have her father's consent; and when I pressed her to my heart, confessed my love, and saw the large tear ready to start from her blue eyes, I overcame the natural timidity of her sex, and extorted, by her bashful silence, the acknowledgment of a reciprocal feeling. Well do I remember—never shall I forget the day when, with her hand in mine, we threaded the

sheltered walks of her garden, and where, secure from the eyes of inquisitive maids, we offered up our vows of constancy and affection.

"Lucy, my dearest Lucy, your silence is sufficiently eloquent and expressive, and I seize the deep sigh for a consenting answer; but now, as no secret should be in my bosom of which you are not a partner, let me freely tell you my situation and prospects; and although, in my eagerness to know I shared your affections, I have elicited a silent approval, yet would I not force you to the completion of an engagement without your fullest consent. At present, I cannot say I am worth one farthing. At my father's death I shall inherit my portion of his large fortune; until then, I confess our means limited to his liberality, and our happiness dependent on ourselves."

"Oh, Robert," she replied, "the prospect of poverty with you is too great a pleasure to be realized. I have almost told you what you anticipated; my affections are yours; and let my father and mother object to our union, they cannot object to the government of my own heart, or of the silent security in which I shall treasure up your love."

"Do you think," I replied, "that your father would give so decided a negative?"

"I have hopes, Robert, that from the long acquaintance with your father and your family, he might be inclined to listen to our union; but latterly he has been entirely confined to his room; is become peevish and melancholy, and he talks of failure and distresses likely to reach him; but, with all his apprehensions, he seems more anxious than ever that the establishment should continue on its present footing, and that no reduction should take place."

"But, Lucy, can you relinquish this splendid house for a cottage and seclusion?"

"Why, Robert, I begin to doubt your ability to sustain such misery; and would counsel you to ponder a little before you speak to my father."

"Have you told your sisters of this growing attachment, Lucy?"

"No: but Mary, in whom I have always placed the greatest confidence, has often rallied me with the fondness of hearing your past life, and ridiculed me as being the harbinger of peace to an age of contentment and love."

"Listen, Lucy! No, 'twas nothing but the wind sweeping away the dead leaves; but it sounded like a footstep. And now, I know not why, I feel as if I were acting dishonourably, and I tremble like a frightened girl. Lucy, I had better not speak to your father just yet."

"I have never, Robert, concealed any thing from him; but now I feel a desire that this should be kept a secret from all but Mary. She will manage to keep watch for us, and I know we can safely confide in her."

"That you may," said Mary, as she appeared before us: "I have kept watch for you already. Turn down that walk as quickly as you possibly can: here is mamma close behind us."

We did as we were desired; and I felt the first creep of dishonesty chill my blood. Lucy's face was as white as snow; and as she pressed my hand, I felt the tremble of a girl about to plunge into deception and falsehood.

Mrs. Stackpole passed close to us, accompanied by two of her daughters, and four of her Italian greyhounds. One of the brutes, in its playful mood, turned down the walk which we had took, and was followed by the rest. They were instantly missed by Mrs. Stackpole, who began to call out for Flora, and Bijou, and Fanny, and Mary: the last being her daughter, who, anxious to cover our retreat, saw the danger in the dogs, and had turned to entice them back. In vain Lucy endeavoured to scare them away with her handkerchief, the brutes seemed to know that she was of too tender a heart to harm them, and, far from being frightened, they endeavoured to seize the end of that useless appendage, excepting during love and colds. We heard Charlotte calling Mary, Mrs. Stackpole calling Charlotte, and Mary calling the dogs. The hunt was certain ruin: so I seized a stone, and hitting Flora rather sharply on the leg, away ran the yelping crew. Mary volunteered a convenient lie on the instant.

"Poor Flora!" said she, as she caught the beautiful beast in her arms, and carried it to Mrs. Stackpole: "I am afraid I hurt you when I trod upon your little paw: but never mind, little Flo. Oh! it is so damp down here, mamma, do let us turn back."

Until this moment I should not have cared being discovered; but now to have been caught in the damp walk,

in the bower at its farther end, in company with Lucy, and shunning her parent, would have been a premature discovery. For once I was lucky, but certainly not fortunate: for, had I been discovered and discharged, many a bitter day sleepless night would it have saved me.

The dogs and women being out of sight and hearing, it became requisite for me to sound a retreat, and I agreed to go back and walk down the other way, meeting Mrs. Stackpole, while Lucy was to follow them, and to appear not to have seen me before.

Break down the barrier, once learn to deceive a parent, to reconcile a lie, to palliate a falsehood, to court deception, and to blink the honest; and shortly, shortly will the victim, step by step, walk to its own disgrace. The veil once lifted, the attractions of vice seem without their consequences; the success of undiscovered guilt prompts to renewal of the crime; and hence the continued depredations of the forger, the perjurer, the practised knave, and the undiscovered prostitute. *Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute*, the French say; and no nation under the sun ought to be more convinced of it than France.

I met Mrs. Stackpole with the blush of falsehood full upon my cheeks, and she mistook it for bashfulness. Lucy met me: we shook hands; we inquired mutually concerning health; and I, blinded by love, admired her guilty dexterity. The walk ended, we returned to our homes—to brood over happiness at hand, and prospects which hope would not allow could be blighted; and day after day, when the invalid was aired in his carriage, and his attentive wife accompanied him, a white handkerchief placed accidentally on a shrub, which we had ascertained could be seen from the road, told me that Lucy awaited me in the garden; and when the signal was not flying, a small note, placed under a gate which opened into a building-ground, gave me the requisite information, and prepared plans for the morrow.

"Lucy," said Mrs. Stackpole one day at dinner, "I think you and that young negro-seller seem to be getting on pretty well together. I suppose, my child, you cannot be fool enough to fall in love with a man whose life has been so disreputable."

There is no plan so certain for discovery as that of

abusing a lover to the object of his love. She is then almost sure to defend him, be secrecy every so much desired; and Mrs. Stackpole, who knew the world well, and who had not escaped unscathed amid its censures, applied the ungenerous terms in order to elicit a defence. She looked at Lucy with the eye of an Old Bailey counsellor, when a doubtful witness is undergoing examination. Lucy turned pale, fell into the snare, and Mrs. Stackpole saw enough to convince her of the necessity of interference. However, she resolved to sound me first, and took especial good care not to allow her intentions to be told to others. I was invited to dinner two days afterward; and as lovers generally find the minutes linger, I was to be found in the drawing-room about half-an-hour before my time. I told the servant not to announce my arrival, and I remained watching the handle of the door for ten minutes; and when it did turn, I saw the tall figure of Sir Jacob Brown, a man well known for his eccentricities, his speculations, and his inventions. We bowed, and commenced the common conversation which distinguishes Englishmen. Shortly after, Lucy came in, and saw how she had allowed an opportunity to escape.

Sir Jacob was a man who, if he hated love in animals, was the veriest Don Giovanni that London ever produced. Tall, handsome, clever, brave—he was all that a woman admires: and if I had not known his character, I might have felt a pang of jealousy even at the commencement of the day. He was so attentive to Lucy, so warm in her praise, so complimentary in his expressions, and so particular in his manner, that I thought Lucy listened with more animation than was pleasant. Mrs. Stackpole's conduct was marked. She was unusually kind to me; she talked evidently at me; and all those pretty speeches which drop from a woman's beautiful lips came mellowed from the little pouting carnations of Mrs. Stackpole. That day her husband was sufficiently well to preside at his own festive board, and, as far as social conversation could enliven such a display, the party was no failure.

"Have you heard," said Sir Jacob, "of the new company about to be formed, for the extraction of alcohol from bread?"

"I cannot say that I have," replied Stackpole; "and I should much doubt its success."

"There can be no doubt," said Sir Jacob; "the shares are already at a premium, and before long all the bakers in the west-end will bake with the company. If I could get rid of my shares in the 'Saw-dust Consolidation Company,' I think I should venture for a hit."

"And your Steam-fishing Association, Sir Jacob—how does that go on?"

"Well," replied the baronet, "very well. That is, the result is certain; but as the government refuses a patent, I intend taking all the herrings to the coast of America."

I naturally startled at this wild extravagance, and thought I was near a maniac; but he resumed.

"I shall give the country one more chance. I certainly do not wish to injure it; but, Mr. Stackpole, I can assure you, that by my new discovery I can lead the fishes away from the coast of England, and can confer the blessing of their annual visitation on a country to which I am partially allied, and in which I have some relations—I mean America."

Mrs. Stackpole, who saw that, in spite of my apprehensions as to my vicinity to the baronet, I manifested some uneasiness for the safety of Lucy, who sat between the baronet and myself, kindly relieved my fears, by assuring me that Sir Jacob was not mad enough to marry.

"At least," said she with an arch look, "one so young as Lucy: that is a speculation which would never answer, unless the other partner brought in the capital. Marriage is a hand-in-hand partnership, in which both should put an equal share; otherwise we consider the gift of fortune equal to the gift of person."

"I should think," I replied, "that fortune does not always confer happiness."

"No, Robert," said Mrs. Stackpole; "but it is a great assistant, and poverty is a great enemy."

"But poverty is a great cementer of friendship."

"Yes," said Mrs. Stackpole, "among thieves."

"But love, Mrs. Stackpole, love! is there no such thing as love to ensure happiness?"

"Love, Mr. Ganjam, is a very pretty little word to rhyme to grove, and bower to hour. And when young people talk of one in the other, they are likely to make very great fools of themselves. Besides which," she said in a laughing manner, "love is all very good for the first month or two,

but afterward comes *ennui*, distrust, jealousy. In short, do you remember this little verse which constitutes my creed:

> Que par amour quelquefois on s'engage
> Dans les liens du sacré marriage,
> Je le crois bien.
> Mais que l'amour ne soit moins violente
> Après la noce, et qu'on ne s'en repente,
> Je n'en crois rien.

In short, Robert, it is a speculation in which just yet you had better not engage."

"What speculation is that?" said Sir Jacob: "are there any shares left?"

"It is the Happiness Insurance, the Hand-in-Hand Company," replied Lucy. "Are you disposed to take any shares, Sir Jacob?"

"Yes, my pretty little Lucy. If you belonged to the Union, any man would take shares."

Mr. Stackpole only spoke when speaking was requisite, and he performed the part so requisite in company of being a listener; but when the subject of matrimony was mentioned, he spoke in raptures of the state, and of all the care and comforts bestowed when sickness broke down the constitution and impaired our health. He finished by a very warm eulogium on his own wife, and addressing himself to me, said:—

"If you ever marry, Robert—and you are too young to think of it as yet—get a wife like mine, and your happiness will be secure."

A kind of hectic flush paid a momentary visit to Sir Jacob's cheeks, and Mrs. Stackpole's eyes saw the shadow as it passed, and turned as pale as death. She recovered in a moment, and thanked her husband for the pretty compliment.

Was that a look of guilt? was the change of countenance merely accidental? or did it arise from the knowledge of my affection to Lucy, and the opening it gave, not only for a compliment, but for a preface to a declaration to her parent? On her face the tell-tale might have acted; but how came that sudden flush upon Sir Jacob's cheek? That was the probe of conscience—the fear of detection—the apprehension that Stackpole had paid the compliment ironi-

cally; and such was the conviction also on his wife; for an awfully awkward pause succeeded, only broken by the parting words of the ladies.

I was not a little shocked at even the idea of an intrigue existing between Sir Jacob and my future mother-in-law, and I resolved to find out if my suspicions were founded on facts. In the evening Lucy and myself agreed upon our plan of operations. I believe at that moment I should willingly have run any risk of any kind for that lovely girl. The plan was to speak to the father the next day; and then, if he wavered, we thought we could overcome all difficulties, and give ourselves away if requisite. We had the usual dialogue concerning eternal love and constancy; years could make no difference in such love; and the letters which we resolved to send through Simpson, Mrs. Stackpole's maid, would keep the flame alive. In the mean time I promised to send my second-self in a picture, and Lucy cut off a lock of as beautiful hair as ever fell over the shoulders of an angel. So far our love, and plans, and words, and vows were all commonplace enough; and we had full time to exercise our wit and our judgment, for the cruel-hearted papa neither heeded the momentary faintings of Lucy, nor the humble supplications of her lover. The old fellow was inexorable, and talked of age, of youth, of money, of connection, of love, as if all but the former remained.

The declaration of the state of her heart made by Lucy to Simpson was a sad oversight; but who could imagine the influence Simpson held over Mrs. Stackpole? The cunning maid expressed a wish to forward our end, and be useful. She volunteered to receive and to send the letters, and she gave me a most welcome squeeze of the hand, as I placed a five-pound note in hers. She agreed to meet me that night after dark, and to tell me what had occurred since my visit to Lucy's father.

The time fixed was eight o'clock, and, lover-like, I was punctual. I had prepared a warm and affectionate letter for Lucy, and I expected that Simpson would have brought me one also. She soon came; and in a hurried manner mentioned that I was never again to be admitted to the house; but that Lucy sent her love, and her promise to adhere to her vows. I gave the Mercury a letter, and a note, and when the clock chimed the half-hour, she took a hasty leave,

desiring me to look under the gate every day at two o'clock. She begged me not to follow her, for fear of a discovery.

It struck me that Mrs. Simpson was in great haste; and when she had left me at some distance, I crossed the street and followed. I had been enveloped in a large kind of military cloak, and having an inquisitive fit, I took it off, and carried it like a bundle under my arm, taking care to limp as I walked. Simpson was still going at a good pace, when she suddenly turned into a narrow street; but she took a careful survey to ascertain that she was not the object of any one's curiosity. At this moment I was not ten yards from her; but the cloak and the limp rendered me secure. She walked until she came to a chapel, when she slackened her pace, and crossed over. I saw a tall man instantly accost her. She took his arm; was in close and quick conversation. I limped by: I heard the voice of Sir Jacob. I could not be deceived. His manner of pronunciation is so singular, his height, his walk; in short, I was convinced it was he. But in order to make myself quite certain as to his identity, I took off my coat and handkerchief, and again passed them. The light of a lamp fell directly upon his face, and there stood the worthy baronet. Simpson was at the moment giving him a note, and I overheard theatre and to-morrow.

One of two things now was evident; either that Sir Jacob was the cherished lover of Mrs. Stackpole, or that he intrigued with some one else in the family. Lucy, among the daughters, could be but the one. Mary was not more than sixteen, and she, as far as her heart could be given, was devoted to a sucking dragoon officer, who, by the assistance of Colley's vegetable die and black grease, had made some downy softness on his upper-lip resemble incipient mustaches. All the rest were younger, and in the school-room. It was evident Simpson himself was not the object; for Simpson was on the hazy side of thirty, and by no means a very pleasant personage; and if he had come all the way to meet her, he would not have remained parading up and down before a church-door for half an hour. I watched them from a long distance, and from a dark corner, until they separated, Simpson taking a straight course homeward, and the gallant officer going in a contrary direction. Simpson passed close to me; I was on the point of accusing her

of dishonest practices, but I thought I should only lay myself open to her treachery, and I was certain that in time I should unravel the mystery.

The note the next day confirmed my suspicions. Mrs. Stackpole was going to the theatre, and I was to be at the garden-gate at nine o'clock, at which hour the good father would have been steeped in hot water and forgetfulness. I knew and have known the saying, "It is never a blot until it is hit;" but I could not help cooling upon my love, when I thought that my mother-in-law would one day be held up to the world in no very enviable light; and when I saw the beautiful creature of my love, her meekness, her mildness, her devotion to me, I thought I had better break my suspicions to her, in order to guard against the treachery of Simpson.

There is a small bower in the garden, to which I have previously alluded, which terminates a kind of labyrinth: the laurel and the lilacs, the trees, the shrubs, the flowers, all combined to shelter it from observation, and to perfume it with their odours. It was built for a retreat in summer, not only for a momentary asylum from the heat, but likewise for a repose for its invalid master. It contained chairs, and a sofa, and a table, and, in short, was a perfect specimen of the talents of Gillow. The drapery festooned over the windows, and it resembled more an oriental tent than an English summer-house. To this retreat I was led by Simpson. It was dark: not a star was to be seen, and the wind murmured through the leafless branches of the higher trees. I entered, but the obscurity was so great that I could not discover any object; and had I not seen the place by daylight, I might have tumbled over the splendid furniture.

"Stay here," said Simpson, "for a moment, and I will shortly return; but we must see that Mr. Stackpole is asleep, and the younger girls in bed, before we venture any farther. And let me advise you, sir, to use the time well; for sometimes we are obliged to run home suddenly, if my master awakes."

"Sometimes! Simpson," said I, catching her by the hand, "sometimes! Why, are you in the habit of coming to this house by night, and does Lucy accompany you!"

"Yes," said the cunning servant. "Sometimes Miss

Lucy and Miss Mary come here in the summer to pass an hour or so; but Mrs. Stackpole has forbid the door being opened after the end of August, and she keeps the key in her room; but mine is a counterfeit one."

"Where is Lucy?" I asked.

"She will be here presently. Take my hint, Mr. Robert; make certain of her for a wife; she is a lovely girl, and in the dark young people can talk without a blush." In about a quarter of an hour she returned with Lucy, and promised not to go beyond the labyrinth. She shut the door and locked it, took out the key, and we were alone.

"Heavens!" said Lucy, as I took her hand and pressed it gently to my heart—"Heavens! if we were discovered here, what would become of us?"

"We should be married," I replied; "and that is why I feel my present situation as likely to ensure my happiness. But can you rely on Simpson?"

"I think I can; for she has always been a favourite of mine, and I of hers. Besides, she has been so long with us, and is so useful to mamma, and has such presents, that she would not like to be turned away, which the discovery would render certain; because she must have taken my mother's key, which we are all expressly desired never to touch without permission, and it is kept in my mother's own desk, and locked up."

"Then there are two keys," I replied; "and I fancy you you and your sister Mary occasionally make use of the second to come and talk over your lovers and your plans."

"Never, Robert, never. I declare most solemnly that this is the first time I have ever entered this house without my mother being with me. What could have made you think otherwise?"

"Merely because Simpson told me so, and that she had got a false key."

"Impossible! Robert, impossible! You cannot suspect me of telling you a falsehood."

"No, my dearest Lucy," I said as we sat upon the sofa, and felt ourselves alone, and hid from all the prying looks of human eyes, "never did I suspect you of telling me a falsehood. But I suspect Simpson to be a very curious woman, and perhaps uses this room to forward her own or

other people's intrigues. But enough of this. Is your heart the same as when last we parted ?"

"Exactly, and my vows unaltered: nothing shall tear me from you. You are the first person who ever attracted my attention, my affection, and my love; and with you I am willing and ready to go round the world.

> 'And with you, my love, for ever could I stray;
> With you conversing, I forget all climes,
> All seasons, and their change.'"

"What did my father say, Robert, when you spoke to him ?"

"Nothing; but that the thing should never happen. He spoke of my poverty as a barrier at present; and he concluded by an observation, which he said was the result of many years' experience, 'That long engagements corrode love;' and that no daughter of his should marry, if the man was not rich enough to ensure her independence in the event of his death. Is he in bed now ?"

"Yes; and has been since eight o'clock, when my mother left him to go to Drury Lane."

"And at what time has she ordered the carriage ?"

"Simpson is gone to inquire."

"And left us here alone, locked in, without a soul within hearing."

Down, down, busy devil; what means this creeping of my flesh, this tremor of my body ? why does the blood desert my cheeks and leave me chilled even when I burn ? Make certain of her for a wife ? Away, unmanly thought! to rifle unprotected innocence, when that innocence trusted to my honour for protection. These hurried words seemed to present themselves before my burning eyes, but my heart reproved them; and I, who had contributed to enslave my fellow-creatures, who had herded with robbers and murderers, felt the inward satisfaction of spurning so unworthy an idea.

"Then, Lucy, in this you are resolved, that if your father refuses to allow you to marry me, you will, in spite of all authority and all remonstrance, be mine ?"

"This is unkind of you, Robert—although you know my love, to place the error of my conduct so glaringly before

me. I will promise you, that I will never cease to cherish the affection I now bear you; and time will either soften my father's heart, or render you so independent as to overcome his antipathy to the alliance. I know it is not either your former life, your family, your abilities, or your want of a profession, to which he objects; but it is our want of money, and his disinclination to part with his own; besides which, I fear he has lost considerably by some bubbles—as Sir Jacob calls his speculations, when they fail."

"I do not like that Sir Jacob, excepting for his conviviality and his talents. Do you think he has any idea of our attachment?"

"To be sure he has; my mother makes him the repository of her heart."

"And her love, my dear Lucy?"

"Is for my father, of course."

"Let us hope so; but last night I knew your mother was going to the theatre, and Simpson did not tell me of it."

"Hush! hush! speak low, Robert: Simpson may be nearer than you expect, and we are now in her hands, and we are wasting moments which might be better employed. You must proceed on your travels directly; your letters to me, for you will, I know, often write, must be directed to Simpson, to come by the twopenny-post. I will manage to answer them: and, as I said before, leave the rest to me, and to time. And as for Simpson—"

"Why," I said, interrupting her, "I fancy she carries letters for more than one."

"What makes you think so?" eagerly inquired Lucy.

"Why, last night I saw her, when she least expected it, give a letter into Sir Jacob's hand. I heard her mention the theatre, and I saw her comfortably fixed arm-in-arm with that gay baronet; nay, I watched her for more than half an hour."

"And what do you suspect, Robert?"

"What I tremble to say, and will not even to you betray my suspicions; but—"

At this moment Simpson opened the door and bade us hurry out immediately, as Mrs. Stackpole had returned home unexpectedly, and had inquired for Lucy. "Come," said Simpson, "don't stand sighing and dying there now, but kiss and be off, Master Robert."

Although I hated that woman, yet I thought her advice good upon this occasion, so pressing Lucy closely to my heart, I imprinted the first kiss on her flushed cheek; she darted down the steps; Simpson directed me to go cautiously, and take care not to be discovered: we parted. The rustling of her dress soon was lost in the murmur of the breeze; and after various windings and pokings, and running against one tree, and then against another, and having fancied every bush an officer, I at last succeeded in getting clear of the garden, and turned to look at the paradise from which I was expelled. I stood musing, and muttering, and pondering, until the lines of a celebrated poet came to my mind,

> "Thus Adam look'd when from the garden driven,
> And thus disputed orders sent from heaven.
> Like him I go, although to go am loth,
> Like him I go, for angels drive us both.
> Hard was his fate, but mine still more unkind,
> His Eve went with him, but mine stays behind."

And thus after chilling my feet by the damp, and warming my heart by the poetry, I turned my back upon the residence of the angel, and having gained the high road, proceeded homewards at a quick walk. I had not gone far when a tall man passed me; I stopped, looked,—it was Sir Jacob. I followed again; he passed the very gate which I had passed, and my suspicions were confirmed.

I was now more resolved than I had been disinclined, to leave the country; and in conformity with my father's wishes, made serious preparations for a long excursion in the kingdoms of the North. It required but little time to get ready. I never was a man bothered by much attendance, and as for luggage, the less the better.

My father had now become, from my attention to my studies, and the progress I made, very much attached to me; and our last parting scene will exhibit his portrait in a finished style. He was as usual, sitting in his arm-chair, perusing his favourite Voltaire: his finger, as I represented it in the first chapter, between the nose and the upper lip; on his table were two or three letters, and as usual, he had read with so much attention and pleasure, that the fire was out, and he at seventy quite warm and comfortable.

"I have prepared for you, Robert, all that is requisite. I give you permission to draw upon my bankers for any amount you may please, and place myself at your mercy not to allow the lure of gambling to supersede discretion. Here are one or two letters of introduction to people who may be serviceable to you. You will write often. And now for my last advice. I couch it in the terms of Shakspeare, for I have never in all my reading found a passage so short, yet so comprehensive. It embraces all that a father could say, or a son practise. Remember, you are to visit courts, where liberty is unknown, and where the voice of the monarch is the law of the land. Therefore, remember this:—

"——— Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear it, that the opposer may beware of thee.
Give to each man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.
* * * * *
Neither a borrower or a lender be,
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell! my blessing season this in thee."

And laying his hand upon my shoulder, he said in a dear affectionate voice, "God bless you! and season this in you." Then rising from his chair, he shook my hand, looked steadily in my face, and as he said "Good-b'ye, my boy," a tear started from his eye, and rapidly coursed down the furrows of his face. I left the house, and departed.

Before I left the country, and during the interval of the nightly meeting and the last scene, I once again visited the garden-gate at two o'clock. There was a note desiring me to throw my handkerchief over the summit, which I had scarcely done, when the door opened, and Mary greeted me. Her father was much worse; her mother displeased

with Lucy; Simpson had quarrelled with her mistress, but was not discharged; and Mrs. Stackpole kept such a watch upon Lucy, that she could not venture to the gate. "My sister desires me to say, that although mamma has introduced a Major Henderson, and talked of his fortune and his family, she will yet remain true to you. Mind, you are to write soon and often. Now I must be going; so good-b'ye, Robert, and don't forget Lucy or me." She put out her innocent little lips, and, after one or two kisses, said good-b'ye half-a-dozen times, and I withdrew.

I saw the clouds gathering which I knew would crush that family. I was certain in my own mind that the father would not live long; indeed, latterly, sickness had so worn him that he was a living skeleton. Day after day he grew weaker and weaker. The faculty thronged the door; the constant attendance of the apothecary seemed requisite; the money passed from palm to palm; and after a serious attack, the head practitioner in London gave poor decrepit Stackpole permission to die; and he availed himself of it, to avoid being blistered and bled, purged, leeched, draughted, and drugged. With a smile upon his countenance, and a kind, affectionate, and thankful acknowledgment to his wife, he turned upon his pillow, and was pronounced dead. The next day each physician left his card. The house was put in mourning—that is, as far as black coats and bombasin constitute grief—the undertaker, the hearse, the nodding plumes, the mutes, the weepers, the brass-nailed coffin, and the splendid pall, were all to be seen a week afterward at St. James's burial-ground. An achievement was put up, "In cœlo quies" thereon, and poor dear old Stackpole was forgotten in less than six months.

END OF VOL. I.

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